



NAVY NEWS

FEBRUARY 2015

Dragons on duty

Chinese visit UK as Type 45 patrols South Atlantic

Unique unit

Behind the scenes at 1710 NAS

FIRST DIVISION

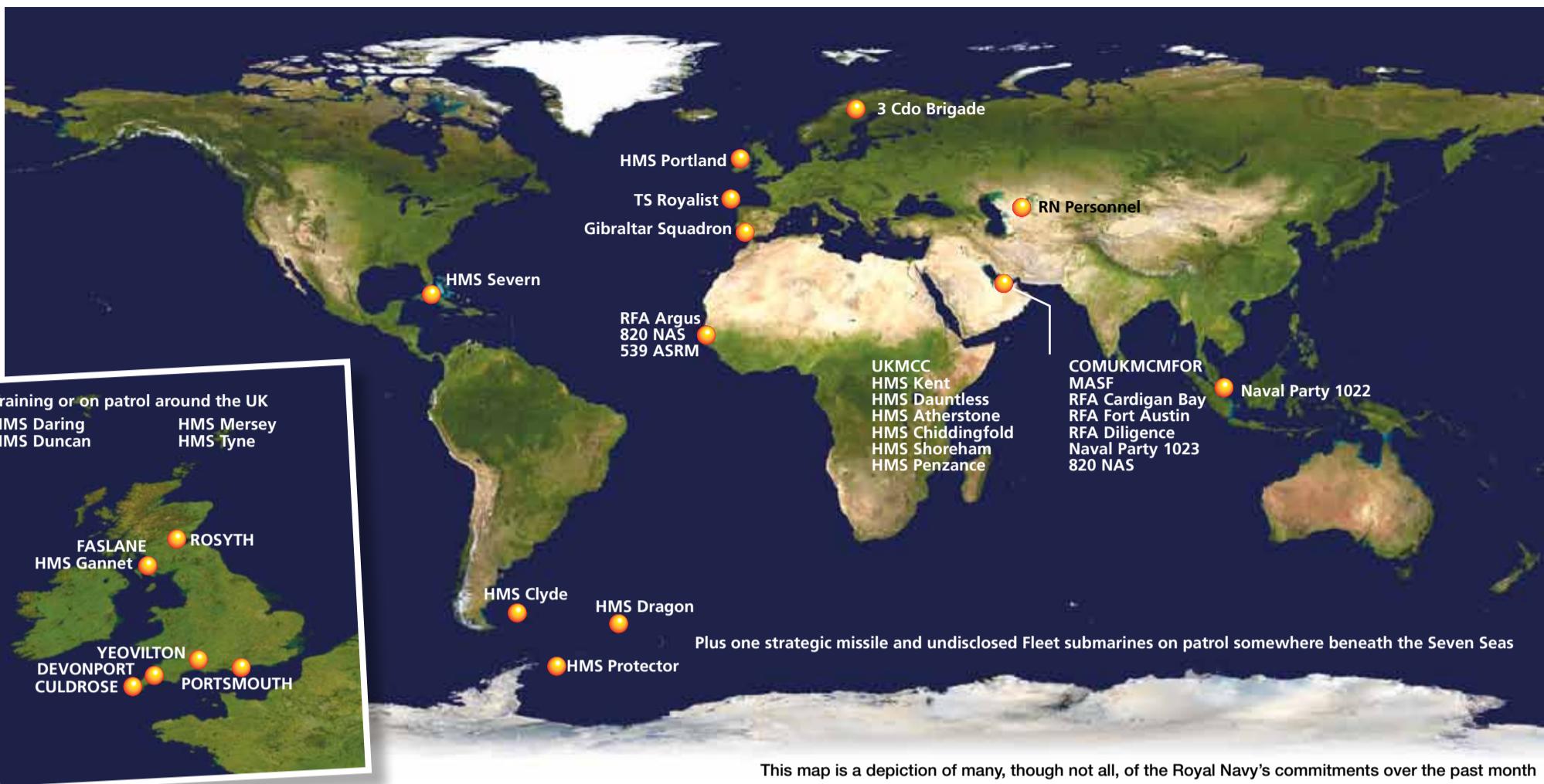
● ET(WESM) Alex Parslow of nuclear submarine HMS Victorious stands to attention during Ceremonial Divisions at HMNB Clyde. More than 130 'deep' attended the event. See page 8.

Picture: CPOA(Phot) Tam McDonald



Off-sale date: March 1 2015

£3.00



This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month



FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

YOU don't often find Royal Navy personnel in the jungle but Merlin air engineer officer Lt Jason Douglas spent six months as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see page 21).

A look at unusual areas of work for the Senior Service continues with the focus on 1710 NAS, the Royal Navy's 'emergency service' and a truly unique unit (see pages 27-29).

Fancy a career in the Fleet Air Arm? A new training system looks at how Royal Navy aviators can progress to the front line and take charge of Merlin Mk2, Wildcat or F-35B (see page 17).

Animal magic was the order of the day as the crew of HMS Dragon went wildlife watching in South Georgia – and were rewarded with loved-up penguins and seal pups (see centre pages).

There were dragons closer to the UK as three warships from the Chinese Navy spent five days in Portsmouth – the biggest visit to Britain by the foreign navy (see page 16).

Keeping with the wildlife theme and the crew of survey ship HMS Enterprise rescued three turtles from traps (see page 6) during her deployment to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf.

Also in the Indian Ocean was HMS Kent where she joined Combined Task Force 150 in the battle to disrupt criminal activity in Pirate Alley (see page 3).

Meanwhile HMS Penzance took on the role of the bad guy in an all-action exercise with American and Iraqi warships for a mock attack on a crucial Iraqi oil platform (see page 5). Also in the Gulf is HMS Dauntless on her second operational deployment.

Commando Helicopter Force put their new green Merlin Mk3s through their paces on an exercise with Royal Marines Commandos on Salisbury Plain (see page 14).

HMS Protector also recorded a first for the RN (see page 7) as members of the ice patrol ship inspected a fishing vessel in the Antarctic under an international convention aimed at conserving marine life.

The crew of HMS Quorn visited their affiliated town of Quorn near Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire for the first time in nearly four years (see page 8), having been in the Gulf for the majority of the time since their last visit.

Marching in the mud is the norm for most Royal Marines but new entrants to the Royal Marines Band were in for a shock as they endured exercises on a muddy and wet Woodbury Common (see page 10).

Five Royal Navy ships returned home in time for Christmas (but not for January's edition of Navy News). Loved ones flocked to welcome back HMS Argyll, HMS Bulwark, HMS Defender, HMS Grimsby, and HMS Iron Duke (see page 4).

World War 1 commemorations continued with a number of remembrance services (see pages 18-19), including one in Lyme Bay where tribute was paid to the victims of HMS Formidable and in Hartlepool where a new memorial was unveiled dedicated to victims of the December 1914 raid. In the Falkland Islands a service was held to remember the first Battle of the Falklands.

The Royal Navy has bid farewell to the Chaplain of the Fleet (see page 20) as the Rev Scott Brown leaves the Service after 22 years.

In the Reservists' world, work has begun on a £2.9m revamp of Royal Navy training centre HMS Calliope on Tyneside (see page 26), while a group of 11 Reservists spent two weeks aboard HMS Iron Duke – in Barbados.

Finally, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets have officially launched their new flagship, to be called TS Royalist (see pages 42-43).

'Oscar' time for Surface Fleet



● RFA Argus was singled out for her work in fighting Ebola in Sierra Leone Picture: Cpl Jamie Peters RLC

undergoing a major overhaul in Devon to ready her for another 12 years' service and has barely a dozen crew assigned to her.

But her captain throughout the Syria mission, Cdr James Parkin, says the award from Rear Admiral Surface Ships Rear Admiral Tony Radakin is rich reward for the 200 men and women who were under his charge during a hectic and demanding year.

"In a busy and unrelenting year, my team of professional and dedicated sailors never failed to do the job they were asked to do, in demanding circumstances, while keeping smiling, even though they were away from their families for many months at a time," he added.

"Coming on top of the ship's aviators being awarded the Osprey Trophy for best ship's flight, I am delighted the rest of the ship's company have been recognised in a similar way, and I am humbled by this accolade being awarded to our fine vessel."

"The 'Class of 2014', wherever they are now serving, can be proud that all the long hours, hard work, and time away, has been noticed by those for whom we worked."

In addition to bragging rights and a trophy, winning a Fleet Efficiency allows the winning vessels and units to fly a special blue and white flag featuring two hippocampi – symbol of the Surface Fleet.

And the winners are

Capital ship: HMS Bulwark
Destroyer: HMS Defender
Frigate: HMS Montrose
Royal Fleet Auxiliary: RFA Argus
Offshore Patrol Vessel: HMS Tyne
Inshore Patrol Vessel: Gibraltar Sqn
Mine Counter-measures Vessel: MCM1 Crew 3 (HMS Blyth)
Hydrographic: Royal Navy
Meteorological Squadron
Engineering: HMS Lancaster
Above-water Warfare: HMS Iron Duke
Underwater Warfare: HMS Richmond
Information Superiority: 40 Cdo
Electronic Warfare: HMS Diamond
Diving: Fleet Diving Unit 2
Intelligence: HMS Somerset

Keeping up the pressure



AND a Royal Marines Commando pointing a .50 calibre rifle at you from above should do it.

If not there's a load of green berets about to come on board.

Followed by 4,500 tonnes of sleek grey messenger of death just for good measure.

For the men and women of HMS Kent, 2015 opened with them applying renewed pressure on the maritime super highway – 5,000 ships run the pirate gauntlet in the Gulf of Aden each month.

Having spent the end of 2014 working with the carrier task group of the USS Carl Vinson, whose jets have been carrying out air strikes against ISIS forces in the Middle East, the Portsmouth-based warship's focus as 2015 opened shifted to the Indian Ocean and keeping seafarers safe.

The Type 23 slipped into international Combined Task Force 150, which has chosen to start 2015 with a concerted effort to strangle criminal activity in the Indian Ocean.

The current focus is disrupting terrorist organisations from using these waters, moving around illicit goods, drugs and weapons.

Warships and aircraft from Australia, France, New Zealand, the USA and the UK are being directed by the Canadian-led task group to step up efforts in the Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden – aka Pirate Alley – Red Sea and Arabian Sea.

They've been charged with building up an even more comprehensive picture of goings-on at sea by monitoring movements, chatting to fishermen and other mariners, working with specialist law enforcement agencies such as the US Navy's NCIS, one of whose expert investigators joined Kent at sea.

The crux of the security mission is board and search, carried out on Kent by a mixture of Royal Marines Commandos, who secure a vessel allowing the ship's sailors to carry

out a thorough search.

They're aided by a Lynx helicopter from 202 Flight normally based with 815 Naval Air Squadron at RNAS Yeovilton and a ScanEagle 'eye-in-the-sky' drone, which beams live imagery directly into Kent's operations room, giving the team in the bowels of the frigate an unparalleled view of a boarding.

First, of course, you have to find the contact of interest.

Given the size of the Indian Ocean (and the task force's realm only covers part of it) and the relatively small number of ships and aircraft involved in the hunt, it's been likened to policing an area the size of Hampshire on a bicycle.

Yet in three days they found three contacts assigned to them amid the myriad of dhows, fishing vessels and larger merchantmen plying their trade in these waters.

Protected by the commandos and with the Lynx patrolling overhead, extensive searches were carried out on two of the dhows encountered – thankfully neither was ferrying any illicit cargo.

That said, Team Kent are not disheartened.

Kent's CO Cdr Andrew Block (who's evidently been watching Liam Neeson in *Taken...*) said: "We are sending a clear message to criminals: *The Royal Navy is here, we will find you and we will stop you.*

"HMS Kent has had an immediate impact on the international naval campaign to deny criminals the ability to use the sea to illegally traffic people, weapons, or drugs, profits from which we know are used to fund terrorist activities. I am hugely proud of my team's efforts."

Task force commander Cdre Brian Santarpia of the Royal Canadian Navy said the collective effort of more than 30 nations working together in 2014 had reaped dividends for security at sea in the region.



"We denied international terrorist networks millions of dollars from illegal trafficking by seizing and destroying around 21,500kg of different illicit narcotics.

"We also assisted in rescuing numerous fellow mariners from the dangers of the seas and promoted cooperation and coordination between regional maritime security agencies through leadership engagements, conferences and visits.

"With the renewed support of the 30 nations contributing to the Combined Maritime Forces this year, we are set to continue this good work throughout 2015."

The good work for 2014 went on right up to Christmas.

Three days before December 25 found more than 300 sailors, Royal Marines and aircrew maintaining the eternal watch against those who might do us harm – in this instance the forces of ISIL in the Middle East.

That mission – Operation Shader to Britons, Operation Inherent Resolve to the Americans – has also demanded a concerted effort.

So aside from HMS Kent slotting into Carrier Strike Group One (one 100,000-tonne flat-top, 49 fast jets, more than 20 helicopters, cruiser USS Bunker Hill and three Arleigh Burke-class destroyers), surveillance Sea Kings of 849 Naval Air Squadron and support ship RFA Fort Austin threw their hats into the ring.

The Sea Kings – normally based at RNAS Culdrose, but deployed east of Suez aboard Fort Austin – used their radars to provide the task group early warning of any threats by sea or air.

It's exactly what the helicopters were designed to do – but in recent years it's become a novelty as they spent five years in Afghanistan tracking the movement of

insurgents, completing their mission last spring.

The veteran Sea Kings with their trademark radar sacks – which give them their Bagger nicknames – joined EA-18G Growlers of Electronic Attack Squadron 139 and E-2C Hawkeyes AWACs aircraft in Gulf skies as part of efforts to both support air strikes and shield the task group.

As for Kent, she was given the mission of plane guard: sailing a few thousand yards behind the Vinson to act as a reference point for aircraft returning from strike missions, adopting a special lighting system by night.

"Working in such close proximity to a ship as impressive as the USS Carl Vinson, while conducting difficult manoeuvres at high speeds with F18 jets flying over the top of us has been a professional experience I will not forget in a hurry," said Lt Nicola Stephen, one of Kent's officers of the watch on the frigate's bridge.

Cdr Block added: "Carl Vinson has been at the forefront of operations against ISIL and it is testament to our strong maritime links that HMS Kent was able to fit seamlessly into their structure.

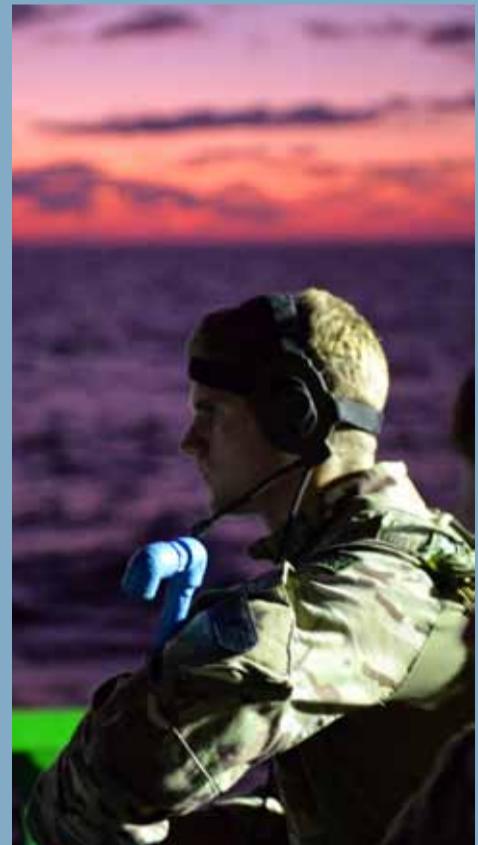
"As the Royal Navy rebuilds its carrier capability it is extremely beneficial for us to work alongside our allies supporting strike sorties."

Also knitted into the US carrier force before the turn of the year was veteran French destroyer FS Jean Bart... which received a little assistance courtesy of Kent and some Anglo-French interoperability.

When the Jean Bart's Panther helicopter was rendered out of action and needed a replacement part, Kent stepped in to help out.

The frigate picked up the piece of kit when she stopped off in Abu Dhabi recently, then flew it across in her Lynx – whose observer is French exchange officer Lt Thomas Ribot – when Kent was within range of the carrier group.

pictures: LA(PHOT) Simmo Simpson, HMS KENT



Best gift of all as loved ones return home

TWO new dads were first off HMS Bulwark as the Fleet Flagship returned to her home port of Plymouth.

AB Tom Ryan and PO Andy Morgan were both met by their partners and babies.

Tom, of Liverpool, hugged his wife Katie, and son Elliot, aged three months, who was born while his father and ship were in Gibraltar.

Tom said: "It's lovely to be home for Christmas. I'm so pleased to see Elliot. I've not been updated with pictures since he was born, so it's a big surprise to see him so big now. He's a happy and healthy baby and I'm very proud of him and of Katie."

Andy, who is in charge of force protection and security on board, cuddled his son Austin carefully – handed to him by wife Steph. Austin, aged four months, was born a week before the ship sailed.

The proud father, sporting a long ginger beard grown while away, said: "This has been a very good deployment. We've been very busy. But the icing on the cake has been coming back home to see my first son – that has made this homecoming extra special."

HMS Bulwark, which spent four months deployed to the Mediterranean and Arabian Gulf on the amphibious exercise Cougar 14, was one of five ships to return home just before Christmas.

HMS Iron Duke was the last Royal Navy ship home before Christmas and hundreds of loved ones lined the jetty as she returned to Portsmouth after six months away, mostly in the South Atlantic.

ET(ME) Ross Turnbull was reunited with his son Archie and wife Lauren, while chief stoker CPO Michael Jeffrey's entire family were dressed in Santa onesies and hats.

Equally delighted to be back in Blighty was chef Lewis Stafford.

With his eight shipmates in the frigate's galley, the 26-year-old served up 7,760 sausages and more than one and a half tonnes of baked beans to their fellow Iron Ducks during the six months away from Pompey.

"This has been the first deployment of my career, and I won't forget it anytime soon," he said.

A proposal, some rather

makeshift Santa hats, plenty of home-made banners and 200 triumphant sailors returning all made for the "best Christmas ever" for the HMS Argyll family.

After 183 days away in the Caribbean, the frigate returned to a warm, colourful welcome Devonport.

Stepping off the gangway more nervously than most of his shipmates was AB(Sea) Ashley Jakes. The 25-year-old from Plymouth got down on one knee in front of the crowd and asked his girlfriend of six years, postal worker Amanda Barlow, to marry him.

Amid cheers from the crowd Amanda, a Royal Mail worker, happily accepted and proudly showed off the ring he placed on her hand.

"It's amazing. I'm lost for

words," she said. "There's no way I would have said no to him. I'm so happy. This makes this the best Christmas ever."

An equally-delighted Ashley added: "I'm happy – I didn't think she'd say no. I was very nervous doing this."

The smallest of the homecomers (discounting the Flights) was minehunter HMS Grimsby, back in Faslane after four months on NATO duties seven days before Christmas.

The Sandown-class ship's stint with NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 2 saw her cover almost 8,000 nautical miles and visit 11 foreign ports.

The ship also called into Casablanca and Algiers in Africa – a first for most of the crew – where they conducted exercises with Moroccan and Algerian

incoming aerial threats, the helicopters' Searchwater radar has proved to be equally adept at following movements on the ground or surface of the ocean.

"For many of the engineers and aircrew this was the first time they had been to sea since their initial training, never mind the first time operating complex aircraft from a moving ship," said observer Lt John Clayton.

"With a gap in sea-based experience of life following such a long commitment to Afghanistan, lessons have been learnt throughout the squadron – from the planning required to ensure a suitable amount of spares and stores are taken to

maintain ageing aircraft at sea, to dealing with the transfer of personnel and stores when vital parts are required.

"All of the 857 Squadron personnel can be confident that they have learned a lot, which can be fed back into the whole Sea King Force as they continue to rediscover their home back at sea."

Sea King AET Marc Summersby said the biggest challenge he and fellow engineers faced was space – or lack thereof – aboard the auxiliary.

"At sea, each task takes substantially longer than on land, which puts more pressure on the maintenance crew, as well as the limited space within which we

work," he added.

"In Afghanistan we lived in rooms with two others but there was plenty of space."

"Onboard Fort Victoria we were living in cabins with three others with far less space than we're used to but it's not been uncomfortable at all – in some ways it helped gel the engineering watch together as we could have a laugh, so it has helped to build a good team spirit."

"From my experience so far, the maritime environment is far more testing than the others I have experienced in Afghanistan and Culdrose."



● Above: Ethan Binns, three, with Ronnie and Amy wait excitedly for PO Ross Binns as HMS Defender returns to Portsmouth

● Below: AB Ross Turnbull from HMS Iron Duke is greeted by Lauren and Archie

Pictures: LA(Phot) Gary Weatherston and LA(Phot) Rhys O'Leary



● AB Tom Ryan kisses his baby son Elliot watched by wife Katie

Picture: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies



● PO Andy Morgan is welcomed home by wife Steph and son Austin; Right: A lone piper greets HMS Grimsby



Picture: CPOA(PHOT) Thomas McDonald



● Amanda Barlow checks out her engagement ring with AB Ashley Jakes

Picture: LA(Phot) Stephen Johncock

Baggers rediscover their role back at sea

ONE group of air and ground crew returned home to Cornwall in time for Christmas...

...and another 40-plus personnel took their place in the Middle East operating the Fleet Air Arm's 'eyes in the sky'.

Forty-four personnel of 857 Naval Air Squadron have completed their first front-line deployment at sea in more than a decade helping to protect British and Allied shipping east of Suez.

Their Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control (SKASaCs – although better known as Baggers courtesy of

their trademark large black sacks) have been flying from supply ship RFA Fort Austin.

The Sea Kings spent five years in Afghanistan supporting ground forces by monitoring the movements of insurgents and helping troops and police to seize drugs, arms caches and Taliban fighters.

With that mission ending in May as part of the UK's pull-out from Helmand, the Baggers have returned to their traditional role of airborne early warning for RN ships.

As well as tracking the movements of

incoming aerial threats, the helicopters' Searchwater radar has proved to be equally adept at following movements on the ground or surface of the ocean.

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£270m spent on Spearfish

THE Silent Service's principal weapon against warships and other submarines is to get a ten-year upgrade.

Whitehall is pumping £270m into Spearfish, the RN's heavyweight torpedo – two tonnes of steel, gadgetry and high explosive which will ruin your enemy's day.

Spearfish has been in service with RN submarines (ships and helicopters carry the smaller, lighter Sting Ray) since the mid-80s and is used by the Astute, Trafalgar and Vanguard class.

To ensure Spearfish remains at the cutting-edge of naval warfare, BAE Systems will spend the next decade fitting the torpedo with a new warhead, safer fuel system, a fully digitised brain and a new fibre-optic guidance link to improve performance.

Once fired from its tube, Spearfish can be guided on to its target from the submarine using the wire – or it can home in using its in-built sonar.

Depending on the speed setting chosen for the torpedo, it can strike foes at more than 30 miles – detonating on impact, or, through an acoustic proximity fuse, underneath the target to break the back of a ship.

The improvement programme will sustain 60 jobs at BAE's site in Broad Oak, Portsmouth, support hundreds more at a dozen firms and sites across the UK involved in Spearfish, and create 40 skilled engineering

Dauntless heads east

ON PATROL in the Gulf region by the time this paper lands on your doormat is HMS Dauntless, beginning her second operational deployment.

The Type 45 slipped away from her native Portsmouth between Christmas and New Year's Day for her first appearance east of Suez (her maiden mission was to the North/South Atlantic in 2012).

As with Defender before her, she'll be dividing her time between patrols to keep the sea lanes open and working with Allied navies operating in the region, such as US Navy task groups (given their air defence capability, the 45s have proved popular additions to American carrier battle groups).

"This is a high-profile deployment for Dauntless during which we are providing reassurance to the UK's allies in the region, while conducting maritime security and counter-piracy patrols," said Cdr Adrian Fryer, Dauntless' CO. "Dauntless has been through intense training to be in a position to undertake this deployment and I am immensely proud of my ship's company."

On her way back from the Gulf, Dauntless is due to join other RN vessels and personnel off the Dardanelles for events marking the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli.

Cheery Chids meet cheery kids

CREW of Bahrain-based HMS Chiddingfold left their minehunter behind in the nearby port to give youngsters at Bahrain Elementary School an insight into the RN.

With the Senior Service expanding its presence in the Gulf by establishing a permanent base in the kingdom, it's keen to build ever-closer relationships with local groups, organisations and institutions.

The Cheery Chids refereed football and played tag before moving on to the more serious business of what the RN does.

PO(MW) Dave Brain led a demonstration of the ship's basic fire-fighting equipment and gave the children a chance to dress up, use the Thermal Imaging Camera and talk to each other on the



Neptune recalls WW2 loss

OFFICERS and ratings from HM Naval Base Clyde gathered on Friday, December 19, to mark the anniversary of the sinking of their wartime namesake, HMS Neptune.

The cruiser was in command of a small task group, Force K, patrolling off the Libyan coast in late 1941 trying to intercept enemy shipping supporting Axis forces in the desert when the ships ran into a minefield.

Neptune struck a succession of mines and sank and although 30 men were able to take to life rafts, only one was still alive after five days drifting in the Mediterranean, 20-year-old AB Norman Walton. More than 760 men perished.

The cruiser's loss is marked by a memorial not far from the present-day Faslane 'super mess' and the anniversary is remembered each December by current personnel.

A short service was led by Rev Simon Beveridge, HMS Neptune's chaplain, followed by a wreath laying (pictured above by PO(Phot) Nick Tryon), attended by sailors and senior Naval officers, led by Neptune's Captain, Capt James Hayes.

Platform games

SO THIS is what they mean by a ship sandwich...

HMS Penzance finds herself caught between patrol boat USS Squall and US Coast Guard Cutter Aquidneck as the minehunter turns bad guy in an all-action exercise to attack one of Iraq's crucial oil platforms.

It's not a good place to be.

Penzance (13kts, 30mm main gun, miniguns and machine-guns) is outpaced by both the cutter (30kts) and Cyclone-class patrol boat (35kts) and is collectively outgunned (a plethora of chain guns, grenade launchers, machine-guns, Stinger missiles), but she can turn on a sixpence, very handy in the confined waters at the head of the Gulf.

The minehunter joined American and Iraqi warships, and an Apache gunship, trying to wreak havoc at the northern tip of the Gulf by launching a mock attack on shipping around the Al Basrah terminal.

The platform is one of two off the Al Faw peninsula and is used by tankers from around the world, who fill their holds with oil from the fields of Iraq.

At the peak of output, the two platforms have been responsible for generating more than four-fifths of Iraq's national income.

Given their importance the two structures are heavily protected.

The Royal Navy spent nearly a decade shielding them while the post-Saddam Iraqi Navy was built up and took over the mission – known as maritime infrastructure protection in official parlance – four years ago.

The Iraqis conduct regular

training to ensure the platforms are safe, but the combined

three-nation exercise raised the stakes considerably – and gave Penzance a chance to play a role far removed from her normal

minehunting duties.

Among the various serials

played out by HMS Penzance,

based in Bahrain for three years:

attacking the support ship RFA Cardigan Bay – doubling up as a

tanker – with US and Iraqi ships

and an Apache overhead, and the

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charge of their respective vessels.

"This is the first time I've fired the ship's guns since I joined Penzance, and I've never taken part in an exercise with ships from another country," said AB Michael Walsh, manning the minehunter's 30mm main gun. "It was really exciting to shoot with targets and was probably my favourite part of the deployment so far."

Helping him fend off incoming waves of attackers was AB William Levers.

"I really enjoy practising the drills we would use to deal with a threat," he said.

"It's good to know that we have a team on board who can react to anything and keep the ship safe."

As part of the exercise, the minehunter hosted Vice Admiral Ali and several Iraqi sailors.

"The Iraqi sailors were clearly very interested in the kit we have available," said Lt Matt Byers, Penzance's operations and mine warfare officer.

"As a diver, I was able to talk them through the details of the diving runs and explain how we operate to enhance our minehunting ability.

"It's such a valuable capability, especially in this region, which is hugely important for global commercial trade and contains three of the world's six maritime chokepoints."

Directing the Royal Navy's input in the training exercise was Cdr Tim Davey, in charge of all four of Britain's minehunters based in Bahrain, from Cardigan Bay, which normally acts as their command and mother ship.

"The maritime protection exercise is just one part of our operations, which aims to maintain safety and stability in the region, working closely with our partners in the Gulf," he said.

"All in all, it was a great success, with capabilities proven and relationships strengthened."

He and his force have now resumed more regular duties, helping to maintain freedom of navigation in the Gulf and throughout the Middle East.

While Penzance's sailors are here for a few more weeks, Shoreham's and Atherstone's crews are back in the UK having completed their seven months in

charge of their respective vessels.

And the ship's divers showed off one of their

SeaFox mine-disposal vehicles before letting the

children don diving suits and test the breathing

apparatus.

"It was a great opportunity to show some of the

children who live away from their own country what

life is like onboard a warship.

"It was a joy to see the smiles on their faces when we were able to get involved, playing games with them and also showing them something completely new and exciting, aside from their normal school work," said LS(MW) Matt Fay, who left a White Ensign signed by his shipmates as a memento of the visit.

charge of their respective vessels.

And aboard HMS Atherstone, Lt Cdr John Cromie and Crew 1 (aka The Fighting Aces) have assumed command from Lt Cdr Simon Kelly, whose sailors are swapping places with their colleagues on HMS Grimsby.

The latter will not take over Brocklesby, vacated by Crew 1, but bring HMS Cattistock out of refit in Portsmouth – once some well-earned leave is over.

"This has been my second deployment here as a commanding officer and it is an honour to have worked with two fantastic crews full of professional and highly-motivated sailors."

The men and women of Crew 5 will now enjoy a well-deserved period of leave before they embark in Shoreham's sister ship, Grimsby, for a deployment to the Baltic as part of NATO's mine

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Victoria ready to rule again thanks to record facelift

LOOKING majestic riding high in No.5 Dock at Cammell Laird's yard in Birkenhead, RFA Fort Victoria belies her 24 years of age.

And well she might for the supply ship has undergone a revamp costing just shy of £50m – the biggest revamp ever carried out by the world-famous yard on a Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel.

The 31,000-tonne stores ship has gone through a ten-month overhaul on the Mersey – one of nine vessels in the 13-strong RFA flotilla to receive a revamp courtesy of Cammell Laird since 2008.

More than 450 men and women have toiled on the ship, which provides the Fleet with fuel, ammunition, stores, spare parts and food when required, since she arrived in Birkenhead in early 2014.

Both Fort Vic's main engines received a makeover, as did other machinery, pumps and pipework, new fire-detecting and fire-fighting systems were installed, living quarters refurbished,



the weapons and sensors driving them were all completely overhauled, and all 669ft of the hull received a blasting, followed by a fresh lick of paint.

"It is hard to underestimate the scale of this job," said Cammell Laird's project director Spencer Atkinson.

"It has certainly been the most challenging to date and required all the lessons we have learned working with the RFA under the cluster contract. Completing this refit is a formidable achievement for the yard and everyone involved."

The ship's Commanding Officer, Capt Shaun Jones, added: "Fort Victoria's refit has been an immense project that will guarantee at least another 15 years' of service to the RN and wider defence.

"Everyone should feel justifiably proud of their individual and collective efforts as Fort Victoria rejoins the Fleet refreshed, renewed and resplendent."



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There's turtles on the starboard bow...

AB Melissa Minion holds a flapping turtle as her shipmate LWtr Lorissa Seville cuts it free from a snare.

The crew of survey ship HMS Enterprise came across the trapped endangered reptile while on their way to the Horn of Africa.

Lookouts on the bridge of the Plymouth-based ship identified the turtle struggling in a net and CO Cdr Mark Vartan recognised it as a turtle snare.

"The floatation device neatly doubles up as a feed tube to lure in unsuspecting animals which are then netted, keeping them alive long enough to be picked up by fishermen who then sell them on to the lucrative food and medicine markets," he said.

Determined to free the magnificent reptile, HMS Enterprise's speedboat was launched under the command of Lt Wendy Hems and the turtle was freed.

Minutes later the team discovered two more trapped turtles.

Once again HMS Enterprise's very own turtle ninjas managed to free the trapped reptiles and recover the net, removing the danger to any other turtles in the area.

LWtr Seville said: "It was amazing. This is by far the strangest thing that I have had to do during my time in the Royal Navy but it was also one of the most rewarding.

"It just goes to show that you never know what will happen next in this job. My gran couldn't believe it when I told her what I had been up to!"

Earlier in their deployment some of the crew took time out to help an orphanage in Goa, pictured right.

Engineers removed overalls and donned shorts and T-shirts to help fix the Mango Tree Trust orphanage's water system and rewire its electrical systems.

At the same time, some members of the ship's company put their nautical skills to good use – including Seaman Specialist Stuart "Mac" Mackenzie who used his rope expertise to rig two sets of swings and fix a trampoline.

"It's great to be able to give something back, especially to those who are so appreciative of what we can offer them," he said.

"The excited sound of the children and their smiling faces, once they were able to play on the trampoline I'd help to refurbish, is something I'll never forget."

Enterprise is on a 22-month mission to boldly go around the Indian Ocean and Gulf collecting data and helping to update charts used by merchant seafarers as well as the Royal Navy.

To that end, while alongside in Goa she showed off her survey suite and systems to 25 students from the Indian Navy's Hydrography School.

And, as the home of India's Flag Officer Naval Aviation, 30 members of the ship's company got to visit a nearby airbase.

The Royal Navy's 'starship' also beamed up images of two enormous underwater mountains in the eastern Mediterranean in unprecedented detail.

HMS Enterprise has mapped two large underwater mountains, technically known as seamounts, while conducting survey operations in the Middle East. The seamounts, one of which is pictured below, had been located previously, but never before charted in such detail.

During a survey, the technical whizzes



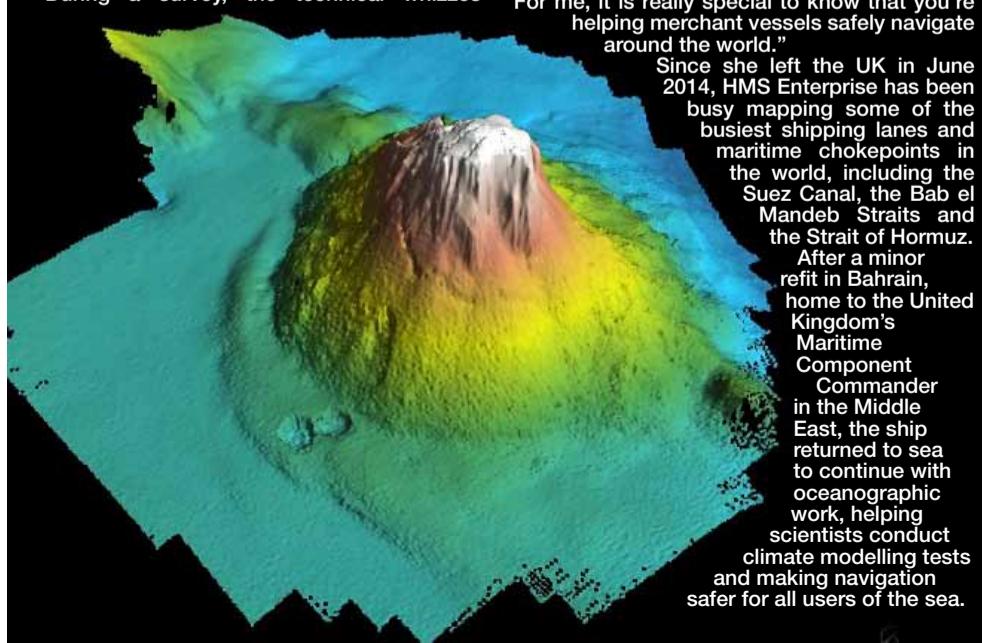
onboard measured the two seamounts at 1100m and 930m respectively. To put that into context, the first is tall enough to find a place inside England's top ten peaks, and the biggest one is taller than both Mount Snowden (1085m) and Scafell Pike (978m)!

The two seamounts, both very real dangers to certain types of shipping, were mapped off the coast of Benghazi, Libya, using the ship's state-of-the-art specialist hydrographic multi-beam echo sounder. As the name suggests, this system sends out multiple beams simultaneously, which creates the incredibly detailed results.

AB Stephen Martin, one of the ship's hydrographic trainees, said: "It was amazing to see such massive natural features under what looks like a flat calm and peaceful ocean. For me, it is really special to know that you're helping merchant vessels safely navigate around the world."

Since she left the UK in June 2014, HMS Enterprise has been busy mapping some of the busiest shipping lanes and maritime chokepoints in the world, including the Suez Canal, the Bab el Mandeb Straits and the Strait of Hormuz.

After a minor refit in Bahrain, home to the United Kingdom's Maritime Component Commander in the Middle East, the ship returned to sea to continue with oceanographic work, helping scientists conduct climate modelling tests and making navigation safer for all users of the sea.



TWO ratings from HMS Protector head out from the ice patrol ship for the first inspection of a fishing vessel in Antarctic Waters.

ABs Dan Roberts and Simon Bownass were part of the team visiting the vessel under the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).

The convention's main aim is to conserve marine life in the Southern Ocean.

The inspection – the first time one has been carried out by a Royal Navy ship in the Antarctic – was done by Lts Adam Butler and Max Parsonson.

"It was the first time I have been on such a factory fishing vessel; it was fascinating to see the process," said Lt Parsonson.

"What we found was a clean, professionally-run vessel with a friendly crew; so our tasking was straightforward on this occasion.

"Our work shows the UK's

commitment to protecting Antarctica in support of the international treaty by safeguarding the diverse range of species here.

"CCAMLR is one of our many tasks and it is easy to see its relevance as large fishing vessels operate increasingly in this region."

Protector also hosted an international Antarctic Treaty Inspection team who undertook a programme of formal inspections of research stations, cruise ships and yachts.

In addition the ship has a team of Royal Navy divers who are carrying out regular dives on behalf of the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) to survey the fauna in the area.

With nearly

24 hours of daylight the ship's company were up all night welcoming in 2015 on Deception Island, close to the Antarctic Peninsula.

That far south the nights are very short so at midnight the sun has not fully set and all around the ship it was still clear and bright.

So, with mugs of tea and coffee, members of the ship's company welcomed in the new year on the bridge.

For the Antarctic Treaty Inspectors New Year's Eve started with a Bulgarian research base

inspection at Ohridiski (South Shetland), before Protector moved to Deception Island to inspect a Spanish research base.

Dr Pavel Sladky, advisor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, said: "It has been a pleasure being onboard a Royal Navy ship and working closely with the crew and other scientists in this beautiful, but harsh, environment."

Deception Island is actually formed from an extinct volcano crater, the centre of which is

navigable through a narrow channel, called Neptune's Bellows and it was there that HMS Protector spent New Year's Eve.

Protector will continue her patrol in the Antarctic Peninsula throughout the early part of 2015 before returning to the UK in time for the northern hemisphere summer.

Picture: PO (Phot) Si Ethell



Net prophets spread the eco-message

We've helped secure pension rights for all Armed Forces widows

Join us and see how we can help you



After seven years of careful and thoughtful campaigning we have finally succeeded in persuading the government to change the rules so that

all Armed Forces widows can now retain their pension on remarriage or cohabitation from April 2015. This will affect the lives of an estimated 400,000 women over the next 40 years. As the pension watchdog for the Armed Forces community, we exist to protect your interests and help you get the most from your pension.

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

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Major General
John Moore-Bick CBE DL
General Secretary of the Forces Pension Society

Forces Pension Society

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V is for Victory (and Victorious)

VICTORIOUS always – and proud of it.

Escaping the elements are the men of Her Majesty's Ship Victorious, charged with the most important task among the Royal Navy's many missions around the globe: the nation's continuous at-sea deterrence.

Some 130 'deeps' from the nuclear submarine's starboard crew formed up for Ceremonial Divisions – held indoors at the Clyde Offsite Centre, just down the road from the boat's Faslane home, due to the particularly grim weather lashing Scotland.

Guest of honour at divisions was Michael Powell, Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers – a trade going back at least six centuries, producing gold and silver thread for uniforms or ceremonial clothing – which is one of the V-boat's

numerous affiliates.

Mr Powell was joined by the deputy head of the Silent Service, Cdre Mike Walliker, inspecting the massed ranks of submariners before a social event at Helensburgh Rugby Club, paid for by Sir Donald Gosling, a long-standing friend and benefactor of the RN.

All qualified submariners in Victorious' crew wore the famous dolphin badge – the symbol which shows that someone knows their boat like the back of their hands and is permitted to join an elite band of underwater warriors – as did the Rev Gordon Warren, who provided the spiritual element to proceedings.

And given Victorious' mission, many of her crew donned the 'patrol pin' – officially the RN Deterrent Patrol Pin: HMS Resolution, with a Polaris missile, wreathed in bands of electrons to represent nuclear power and bearing the motto

'always ready' – which recognises their unique service.

The pin was introduced for V-boat crews back in 2010 – silver for every man who has sailed on a deterrent patrol for more than 30 days, gold for submariners who have completed 20 or more patrols (which amounts to around five years submerged on operations – and that's not counting the training beforehand).

The design of the pin pays homage to Resolution, the very first deterrent boat, which conducted the first patrol with Polaris missiles on June 15 1968.

Not a day has been missed since the round-the-clock patrols began, with submariners past and present having successfully conducted upwards of 300 missions, well over 100 of them by the V-boats, which replaced the R-boats from the early 1990s onwards.

Picture: CPO(Phot) Tam McDonald

Orwell that ends well

FOR the first time in nearly four years, the crew of HMS Quorn had the chance to visit their affiliated town – and they seized it with aplomb.

A three-year stint in the Gulf as part of the RN's permanent minehunting force in Bahrain kept the Portsmouth-based ship away from Suffolk.

But with her place east of Suez being taken by HMS Chiddingfold last summer, Lt Cdr Stuart Yates and his sailors brought the Hunt-class ship back to Blighty.

After a spot of maintenance following her exertions in the heat, the ship has been getting back to more regular duties in home waters – and that meant catching up with affiliates.

The ship is bound with her namesake hunt and village in Leicestershire, plus nearby Melton Mowbray.

But more recently she's also been linked with Suffolk's county town, filling the gap left by HMS Grafton when she was paid off.

The good folk of Ipswich granted Quorn the historic honour of freedom of the borough back in 2011 – promptly exercised.

And exercised again as 2014 drew to a close during the ship's five-day stay on the River Orwell.

More than 700 people filed aboard the ship – thankfully not all at once – as she opened her gangway to visitors, from members of the public by ticket to local groups, Sea Cadets of TS Orwell, and RN veterans.



● Quorn's Colours party lead their shipmates through Ipswich town centre

Royally hosted were the veterans of the Ton-class association – their ships were the forerunners of Quorn and her sisters.

"The ship's company created a most favourable impression throughout the community," said Peter Down, the association's honorary secretary.

"The highlight was the parade and with the band of the Royal Marines providing the drums, it was a spectacle which could not be bettered," said Lt Cdr Yates.

Mayor Cllr Bill Quinton said fellow townsfolk did the small ship proud by showing "our



Navy friends what a real Ipswich welcome looks and sounds like."

All of which went down very well with the ship's company.

"I know all of Quorn's sailors are especially proud of our strong links to the town and were delighted

to parade through the town, as well as the chance to open the ship to the public and to offering local people the chance to see what life on board a minehunter is like," said Lt Cdr Yates.

His ship is now back in and around the Portsmouth area undergoing training and trials.

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Today's namesake ship is about 18 months away from completion, undergoing fitting out in a giant basin at Rosyth, where technicians and engineers from the Aircraft Carrier Alliance are working with an ever-growing ship's company to bring the flat-top to life.

Sea trials are planned for 2016, with the new Queen's arrival in Portsmouth in early 2017.

"Today's event celebrates 100 years since the commissioning of our namesake ship, the only other HMS Queen Elizabeth," said Lt Angela Armour, the carrier's education and training officer.

"It is a great honour to be able to remember the great battleship, which survived both World Wars, in the company of veterans who served on board. Listening to their stories is so fascinating and seeing the ship's artefacts in the museum has really brought it to life."

Vanguard takes steps to help islanders

NINE submariners from HMS Vanguard's port crew recently visited their affiliated island to help with a community project and attend a service of Remembrance.

The deeps headed to Islay where they spent two days repairing a stretch of coastal path and visiting Kilchoman Military Cemetery.

The path runs close to the Carraig Fhada Lighthouse, overlooking a popular walking spot known as 'the Singing Sands'.

The sailors worked rebuilding a stairway, known locally as Vanguard Steps in honour of the V-boat.

The oldest of the RN's nuclear deterrent

submarines, Vanguard has enjoyed a long affiliation with Islay, but it's been two years since her port crew last visited.

The submariners attended a service in memory of the men of troosphip HMS Otranto which sank off Islay in a storm in 1918, taking all but 20 of the 490 souls aboard – mostly American troops bound for the Western Front – down with her.

"We were very glad to be able to visit – or in some cases revisit – such a beautiful part of Scotland. It was also a pleasure to be able to make some contribution to the local community," said Lt Oliver Morrow.



● 96-year-old Joseph Batty-Pearson and LET Kevin Turnbull admire mementoes from the battleship

Picture: Nicola Harper, BAE Systems



High eye for Sutherland

THE Fighting Clan is now the All-Seeing Clan thanks to a new radar – and some engineers with a head for heights...

Some 25 metres (82ft) above the Hamoaze – and 32 metres (104ft) above the keel – on a foul December day HMS Sutherland received Artisan 3D, rapidly becoming the standard 'eyes' of the frigate fleet.

The Type 23 is in the final stages of a year-long refit in her home base. Among the gizmos and gadgets (technical terms) being fitted during that revamp – which will effectively help double Sutherland's lifespan – is the 997 radar, aka Artisan.

Already proven on Her Majesty's Ships Argyll and Iron Duke on deployment, Artisan can follow up to 800 targets simultaneously at ranges of up to 125 miles from the ship.

In charge of making sure the 700kg radar – about the same weight as Lewis Hamilton and his McLaren F1 championship winning car – is in full working order is 31-year-old PO(ET) James Chisholm and his team of weapon engineers.

"It was great to see HMS Sutherland finally receive her 997 Radar antenna. I am really looking forward to flashing it up for the first time and having my chance to maintain and gain experience on the Navy's newest radar."

Which he and his shipmates will be doing early in the new year as Sutherland completes her revamp and begins sea trials, the first stage in a year-long programme of regeneration to prepare the frigate for renewed front-line duties.

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● Turks delight... Locals and tourists queue up on the jetty in Grand Turk while they wait to look around HMS Severn and (right) one of the ship's junior rates shows how to manoeuvre the ship's 20mm main gun

Bring me sunshine...

BECAUSE right now we could do with the men and women of HMS Severn bottling it and sending it back to Blighty...

For while their countryfolk are shivering in the depths of a pretty parky (technical term) British winter, the patrol ship is lapping up the Caribbean sun.

For despite winter being in its nadir about now in the northern hemisphere, temperatures in the British territories scattered around the waters between North and South America are still in the mid-20s Celsius. Which is nice.

We didn't, of course, despatch the River-class ship across the Pond – and away from her more normal fishery protection duties around UK waters – so the 40 or so souls aboard could top up their tans.

No, we sent them to fly the flag, carry out policing duties and remain on standby should any UK communities be afflicted by natural disaster.

And given their expertise in the realm of monitoring fishing activities, they also shared their board-and-search experiences

with authorities in the Turks and Caicos.

The islands' police marine division laid on an exercise to stop and inspect a vessel illegally fishing in their waters – where grey and blue angelfish, reef butterflyfish, tiger grouper, midnight parrotfish, ocean triggerfish and great barracuda thrive rather than the cod, herring, mackerel, plaice, haddock. Severn's fish team are more used to... in considerably clearer and warmer waters than the Atlantic or North and Irish Seas.

Following the training package, Severn spent two days alongside in Grand Turk hosting visits from local schools and community groups, and held an evening reception and capability demonstration.

A select Grand Turk XI challenged HMS Severn FC (comprising a quarter of the ship's company, not counting subs and coaching staff...) and promptly won 5-1. The locals were less-than-magnanimous in victory by tweeting the result... then boasting "let's be having you".

A great deal of the humanitarian efforts

of RN ships dispatched on Atlantic Patrol (North) duties are focused on clearing up the aftermath of a hurricane (as HMS Argyll did last autumn).

The storm 'season' closed at the end of November which means (touch wood) things should be calm during Severn's stint.

Unless, say, the Soufrière Hills wakens from its dormant state and spews lava all over Montserrat – as it did in 1995, when HMS Liverpool came to the rescue.

The southern half of the island remains an exclusion zone, but nearly 5,000 British citizens continue to inhabit the north.

Severn anchored in Little Bay and sent sailors ashore to learn the latest updates on activity from scientists at the Montserrat Volcano Observatory and the Disaster Management Coordination Agency, so the ship's company are fully up to speed in the event the sleeping giant wakens with terrible resolve.

Away from the fire and fury of Nature's wrath... the ship's company helped host

a children's beach party organised by the local Red Cross branch.

Also visited on the Caribbean circuit during the early stages of Severn's deployment were Antigua and Barbados.

The ship spent four days in the latter island where the rugby team met the Barbados 7s international side coach to set up a future match between the two sides.

Severn opened her gangway to a number of visitors, including the local Coast Guard who toured the ship and discussed future training opportunities, Duke of Edinburgh Award participants and the families of employees of the British High Commission in Bridgetown.

"Having been away from home for the holiday season, it was nice to balance the difficulty of separation with the variety of the locations we've had the pleasure of visiting," said Lt Cdr Steven Banfield, Severn's Commanding Officer.

"It was an honour to visit, and in particular be so warmly welcomed by the Turks and Caicos Islanders during our short stay."

1SL sets students challenge

STUDENTS in Bristol will be set engineering challenges by the RN as part of efforts to revitalise interest in things mechanical and technical.

The Bristol Technology and Engineering Academy has become the latest UK centre of higher learning to sign up for the Young Engineers RN UTC Engineering Challenge.

They are being set the task of designing and building a remote-controlled vessel to recover and remove floating and submerged items.

Students will also be invited to attend a week of engineering challenges in Portsmouth, where they will find out more about the marine and weapon engineering professions in the Senior Service.

The initiative is endorsed by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir George Zambellas, who wants to encourage more youngsters to be "part of the engine room powering our national success" in the future.

Shells found on beach...

OF THE bang bang variety...

Bomb disposal experts from Southern Diving Unit 2 in Portsmouth were called to deal with two pieces of elderly ordnance uncovered in marshes on the north Kent coast.

The divers were called to the Swale estuary where a fisherman had unearthed the historic ammunition. A pre-WW2 shell was destroyed in a controlled explosion, while a 4.5in solid shot was retained by the Horsea Island-based divers for further analysis.



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● A Royal Marines recruit searches for litter

Picture: Guy Newman

Tidy job on the common

ROYAL Marines recruits helped to keep Woodbury Common tidy.

The trainees, based at nearby Lympstone, regularly use the common for military exercises.

The land is also visited by thousands of people daily for recreational reasons, such as running or dog-walking. And that means that over time a fair amount of rubbish is generated.

So, armed with plastic bags alongside their SA80 rifles, the recruits, working in conjunction with landowners Clinton Devon Estates, conducted a sweep of the common, picking up both military and civilian rubbish as they went.

Captain Lee Piper from CTCRM explained that the heaths were an important part of the early training of new recruits, who learnt a range of skills on the common, including fieldcraft.

He said: "We like to make sure that when we leave the area we clean up after ourselves and we conduct a litter sweep collecting both military and civilian waste from the area."

"There's a lot more civilian waste than you'd like, but we pick that up as well as our own. It's one way we're giving something back to the community."

Dr Sam Bridgewater, Nature Conservation Manager for Clinton Devon Estates, said he appreciated the effort the Royal Marines put in.

"This site is one of the most important conservation sites in Europe, and every recruit that comes through Lympstone gets a lecture from me or one of my colleagues about the importance of the site," he said.

Dr Bridgewater added that it was clear from what was collected that the amount of civilian waste far outweighed the military litter, such as spent ammunition cases, that the marines collected.



● Royal Marines Band trainees struggle through the mud in the River Exe as part of their schooling

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dean Nixon, CTCRM

I'm a budding Bandie, get me out of here

HERE being the mud in the tidal estuary of the River Exe.

For just as their counterparts striving to earn the coveted green beret must struggle through the Exe sludge, so too new entrants to the Royal Marines Band.

Thirteen weeks of the trainees' 30 months of schooling to become fully-fledged musicians in the Corps is devoted to turning them from civilians into military men and women.

Having been given a two-week taster of life in the Armed Forces at the Royal Marines' School of Music in Portsmouth, the musicians decamp to the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone in Devon to earn the 'Royal Marines' title on their shoulder flashes.

The course is intended to be similar to regular recruit training – although it's adjusted to reflect the fact that the trainees are joining as musicians, not front-line commandos.



● Trainees take part in a stretcher run through the River Exe as well as completing exercises on Woodbury Common

They endure Initial Military Fitness (also known as Swedish PT) in the gymnasium, drill on the parade square, learn how to read maps, receive medical training, send signals, escape from an upturned helicopter in the swimming

pool at Yeovilton (known as the dunker) and go through amphibious and sea survival training in Portsmouth and Poole.

The musicians also complete several exercises on Woodbury Common, next to the commando centre, learning the basics of living and fighting in the field.

"I realised there would be military training – I just didn't realise how hard and how much would be crammed into the time we are here," said 18-year-old Musn Mairi McEwan from Fife in Scotland. "It's hard, tough work, lack of sleep, but it's well worth it."

Musn Phoebe Kidson from Shropshire added: "I chose the Royal Marines Band because of the combination between

the incredible musical training and the physical training element as well.

"I knew it would be hard but you can't ever imagine the environment until you are here. I have a brother in the Corps and I never understood what he went through in training. Now I have the utmost respect for him."

And from 20-year-old Musn Henry Neish from Cambridge, who plays clarinet and violin: "I think the Band does need this level of military training because it's better to train now than be thrown in at the deep end on an operation, but I didn't realise it would be so mentally as well as physically challenging."

As for the mud run, it's considered a rite of passage

for every member of the Corps, so take a top tip from Musn Kidson: "You need to just push yourself and get through it."

The young musicians complete their training with a passing out parade in front of their families before returning to Portsmouth to complete up to two years eight months of training to become fully qualified.

"I was at college and saw the band service on the TV and thought that is what I want to do," says Musn Alasdair Chatterton, 20 from Liverpool. "I didn't realise the level of military training we would undertake. It was a shock to me, but it was good to be thrown into it."



● The gruelling course ended with the trainees' passing-out parade at Lympstone



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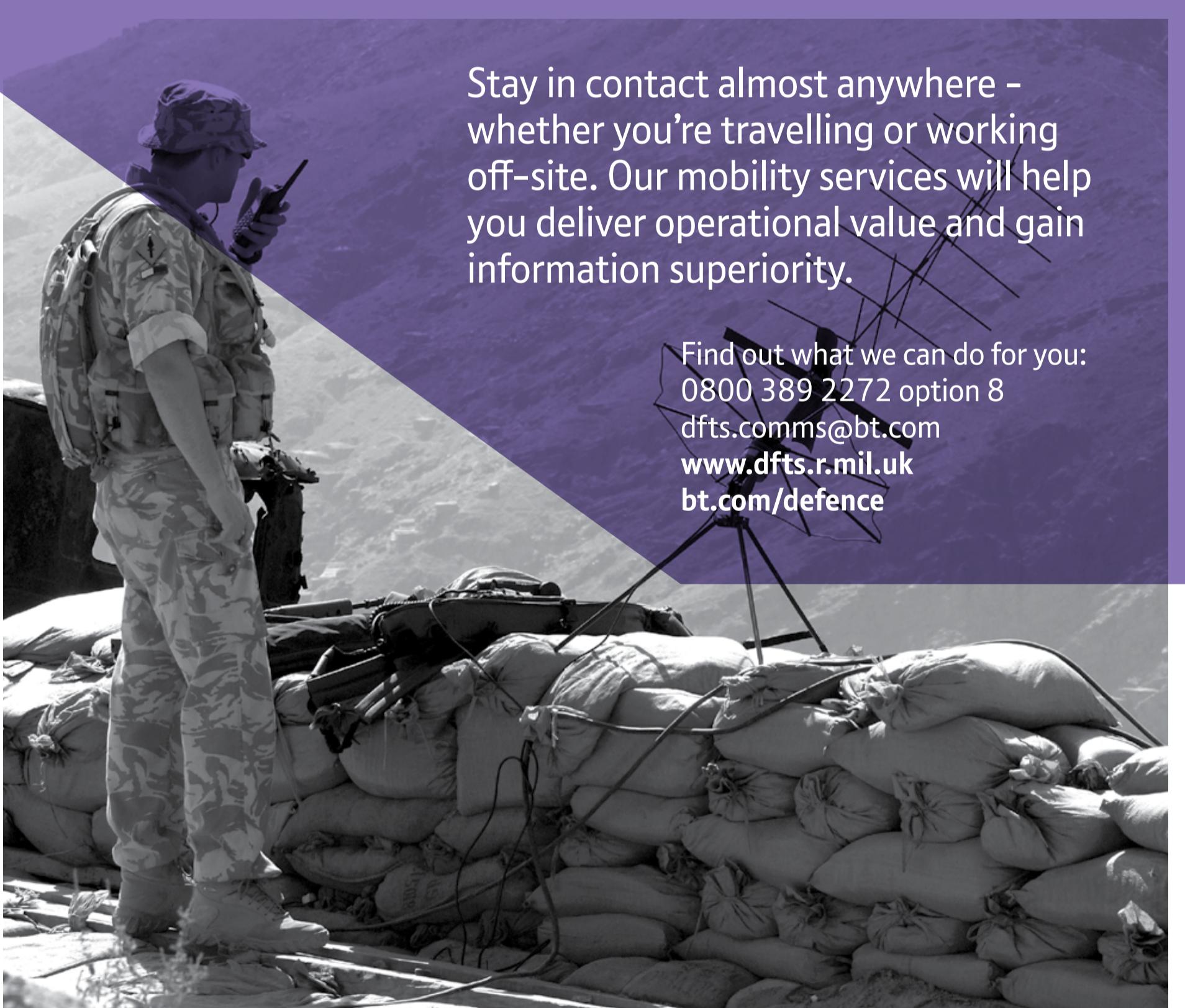
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Glory, farce, tragedy



WITH her ensign at half mast and flying the Norwegian flag, HMS Royal Oak crosses the North Sea to return the body of the Scandinavian nation's queen to Oslo in November 1938.

Today, the battleship is perhaps best known for her tragic demise, sunk in Scapa Flow in October when German submarine U-47 negotiated the Home Fleet's defences to send several torpedoes into her side. More than 830 souls lost their lives, many of them boy seamen.

The tragedy – and especially the deaths of so many boys – has cast a long shadow over the Royal Oak, rather unfairly.

For the ship had a (mostly) proud – and most definitely varied – career under the White Ensign.

The third of eight planned Revenge-class battleships (only five were actually built, although two – Renown and Repulse were 're-born' as battle-cruisers), Royal Oak cost around £1.5bn (in 2015 prices) and was commissioned just in time for participation at Jutland.

And though commissioned less than a month by the time the Grand and High Seas Fleets converged in the North Sea in the spring of 1916, she acquitted herself with distinction.

Following the nation's flagship, HMS Iron Duke, into action in the 4th Battle Squadron, more than three dozen 15in shells were fired by her four twin turrets that afternoon, three of them hitting the German battle-cruiser Derfflinger – whose guns had earlier destroyed HMS Invincible. Combined with the pummelling she'd taken from other British vessels that day, the German ship was out of action for nearly five months.

Indeed the only ship Royal Oak sank in her 23 years was British, not German, in the very final days of the Great War. At anchor in the Forth, the battleship was struck by the seaplane carrier Campania as a squall raged through the estuary.

The Mighty Oak was mostly unscathed, but not the Campania whose hull was pierced and whose engine room quickly flooded, before the ship rolled to port and sank. Her sinking was sufficiently slow for her crew to be saved – and for an official Naval photographer to record the final

	Honours
Lowestoft	1665
Orfordness	1666
Velez Malaga	1704
Passero	1718
Chesapeake	1781
The Saints	1782
Jutland	1916

Class: Revenge-class battleship

Nickname: The Mighty Oak

Motto: Old and firm

Builder: Devonport Royal Dockyard

Laid down: January 15, 1914

Launched: November 17, 1914

Commissioned: May 1, 1916

Displacement: 31,630 tonnes

Length: 189m (620ft)

Beam: 27m (88ft 6in)

Draught: 10m (33ft)

Speed: 22kts

Complement: 909

Propulsion: Hawthorn Leslie steam turbines generating 40,000SHP

Range: 8,060 miles at 10kts

Armour (1914): 1-13in (belt), 4-6in (bulkheads), 4-10in (barbettes), 13in (turrets), 1-2in (decks)

Armament (1914): 8 x 15in guns in four turret, 14 x 6in, 2 x 3in, anti-aircraft, 4 x 3pdrs, 5 x machine-guns, 4 x 21in torpedo tube

musical entertainment, he lambasted the battleship's senior officers for their inability to organise a dance.

Her captain and his executive officer bristled, complained to Collard's superior, were dismissed – as was Collard – and ended up before a court-martial for subversion.

All of which would have been pretty unsavoury in itself, except that it was played out in the press who thought it most entertaining.

Not so the Mediterranean Fleet's commander, Sir Roger Keyes – hero of Zeebrugge – who, most likely, would have been made First Sea Lord when the post next became available, but didn't...in the eyes of many because of the Royal Oak affair.

From 'mutiny' (as some in the newspapers called it) to civil war and 78 years ago this very month the battleship twice came under attack from Spanish Republican forces – first she was bombed three dozen miles east of Gibraltar when she was evidently mistaken for Franco's dreadnaught España. The bombs missed by a good 500 yards. Not so shrapnel from an anti-aircraft shell from Republic guns which hit the ship off Valencia.

The Foreign Office protested at the first act, but brushed off the shell incident, even though splinters injured five sailors on the Royal Oak's quarterdeck, among them her Commanding Officer, Capt Thomas Drew.

Thankfully, neither ship nor crew were seriously afflicted, for they attended George VI's Coronation Review in the Solent in May of the same year before returning to what one correspondent famously called 'the Spanish cockpit', this time to support merchantmen in the evacuation of refugees from northern Spain.

Back in UK waters in 1938, it fell to the battleship to repatriate Edward VII's daughter, the first Queen of Norway in half a millennium – when she died at Sandringham.

Shortly afterwards, Royal Oak was paid off, only to be reactivated in the summer of 1939 ready to deploy to the Mediterranean. The gathering clouds of war with Germany determined she would be sent north, not south, to guard against attempts by Hitler's Navy to break out into the Atlantic.



PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

HER twin 12in barrels of A turret partially obscured by smoke, aged battleship HMS Canopus sends two high-explosive shells towards fortifications in Asia Minor – one of the preliminaries to the doomed Gallipoli campaign.

Our dip into the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum takes us to the late winter of 1914/15 and efforts to force the Dardanelles and sail an Allied Fleet to Constantinople – without the need to put 'boots on the ground' (in modern parlance).

The narrows were well guarded by forts at the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula and across the strait in Anatolia – invariably referred to by Britons as Asia Minor or Asiatic Turkey – and there could be no thought of attempting to reach the Ottoman capital without neutralising the guardians of the Dardanelles.

And so, at 9.51am on Friday February 19 1915 HMS Cornwallis belched fire and fury at Fort No.4 at Orkanie, one of 12 Anglo-French battleships committed to the initial stage of a bombardment lasting one day short of four weeks (Canopus would join the effort at the beginning of March).

In Cornwallis' crows' nest, 150ft above the waterline, gunnery officer Lt Harry Minchin observed the fall of shot – about one round every minute in a methodical rather than hellish barrage.

"I scored a jolly good hit first go," Minchin wrote with schoolboy-esque excitement.

After an hour or so of pounding Fort No.4, Cornwallis supported HMS Vengeance as she grappled with Fort No.1 near Cape Helles, close to the foot of the Dardanelles, and the Turks fought back.

"So we rushed in to support her & fairly blazed at the fort, every gun in the ship going off together & doing two rounds a minute at least from every gun," Minchin recorded.

"We blew No.1 Fort to a perfect inferno, rocks & smoke, flame, dust & splinters all in the air together. We then got under fire from another fort, so we switched onto her then & never in my life have I had such a ripping time."

"We weren't hit, although we had a few close shaves. I think our rate of fire must have put them off their stroke. 3,000 lbs of shell a minute bursting all round one must be a bit disconcerting, you know."

The barrage continued till dusk and, while the guns of the combined fleets had failed to subdue the Turkish defences entirely, the first day was still, in the words of the RN's official historian Sir Julian Corbett, "promising for the success of the enterprise."

Such a judgment would soon be shown to be wildly optimistic.

■ This picture (Q 13785) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@iwm.org.uk or by phoning 0207 416 5333.





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ALTHOUGH from the skies pictured here, it looks surprisingly pleasant for Salisbury Plain in the depths of winter...

As it was, Royal Marines Commandos provided the storm and Commando Helicopter Force Merlins provided the, er, Merlins for Merlin Storm – the first proper test of the green berets and their new aerial battlewagon.

This is the moment six months of training for aircrews reaches its climax for the men and women of CHF, converting from the trusty Sea King to the newer, bigger and faster Merlin.

Three green Merlin Mk3s from the Operational Conversion Flight of RAF 28 Squadron rocked up at Rolleston Camp to test 16 student aircrew (eight pilots, eight aircrewmen – responsible for gunnery, navigation, winching and the safety of the commando passengers) to see how they handled operating in the field, rather than their normal base at RAF Benson, near Oxford.

The wings of the Royal Marines – who carry the green berets into battle from Royal Navy warships, airfields or makeshift air strips and landing zones – are half-way through upgrading from the Sea King Mk4 to the Merlin Mk3, which are being transferred from the RAF to the Fleet Air Arm.

Armed with up to three machine-guns and able to carry around 20 commandos in full kit – or a six-tonne load slung beneath the fuselage, such as a Land Rover, BV tracked vehicles, 105mm gun or stores – the Merlin has effectively got twice the capacity of the Sea King it replaces.

After six months of learning how to fly and 'fight' the Merlin, the students – 14 of whom were converting from the old helicopters – were joined for the Salisbury Plain exercise by green berets of 45 Commando, normally based in Arbroath, as well as the remaining Sea Kings still flying with 845 Naval Air Squadron and some RAF Pumas.

Instructor Lt Alastair Campbell said the trainees had already demonstrated their abilities to fly Merlin safely in a "benign 'academic' training environment" and now needed the experience of tactical flying with real troops – with the added pressures thrown in by staff "to keep the trainees thinking and reacting to the developing scenario."

He added: "On the whole, the trainees' performance was excellent and as a result they have now been able to join the operational 'front-line' flights. In the near future they will expand their experience by training in Arctic and desert environments and possibly even be employed on operations."

In temporary surroundings and rudimentary conditions, the pilots and aircrewmen had to plan sorties, all within the limits laid down by the instructors, avoiding threats on the ground and in the air.

The mission? To sweep through the village of Imber – vacated by its inhabitants 70 years ago as part of preparations for D-Day and subsequently used by the Army for urban combat training, known by

commandos as FISHING

(Fighting In Someone's House).

The village – occupied by enemy forces for the sake of Exercise Merlin Storm – was just three minutes' flying time from the Merlins' makeshift base.

The helicopters dropped off their Royal Marines 'cargo' before the green berets – Zulu Company, 45 Cdo (scores of them rather than thousands...) – swept through Imber and were picked up by the Merlins after the 'battle' – as were captured enemy troops – while casualties were airlifted from the battlefield.

Lt Cdr 'Jockey' Wilson, in charge of the Operational Conversion Flight, said Merlin Storm was part of "a more austere focus" to educating the next generation of Commando fliers in an environment they're almost certainly likely to operate in.

"The final assault is typical of Joint Helicopter Command Operations – helicopters from both the RN and RAF operating closely to provide 'lift' for Royal, culminating in a very significant effect at the target landing site.

"For the students, the opportunity to operate with other aircraft types and simultaneously working closely with troops is a great experience, and adds huge value to their training."

At the end of their instruction in January, the students moved on the front-line Merlin squadron, 846 NAS, currently at Benson, but due to return to RNAS Yeovilton in April.

It will be followed by the other Commando Helicopter Force Merlin squadron 845 in 2016, once it replaces RAF 28 Sqn.





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Were your ancestors at Gallipoli?

RELATIVES of men who fought in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign can march in their memory at a unique centennial commemoration in London this April.

More than half a million Allied troops fought in the attempt to knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war – and nearly half of them became casualties.

The 100th anniversary of the Dardanelles campaign – which sought to capture the Gallipoli peninsula so Allied troops could march on Constantinople (present day Istanbul) – is being remembered by three days of events involving Commonwealth participants.

The centrepiece is an Anglo-Australian-New Zealand ceremony and march at the Cenotaph in Whitehall on Saturday April 25. In addition, there'll be a dawn service at Hyde Park Corner and a service at Westminster Abbey.

In Turkey, the previous day, Friday April 24, there will be an international service of remembrance at Cape Helles – where British, Commonwealth and French troops came ashore.

And finally, there'll be the unveiling of the newly-restored monitor HMS M33, which saw action off Gallipoli, on August 6, the 100th anniversary of the landings at Suvla – the last major effort by the Allies to turn the tide of battle. She is undergoing a £1m-plus restoration in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

As well as hammering Turkish positions with its guns, putting troops ashore (and subsequently bringing them out again when Gallipoli was evacuated in the winter of 1915-16), the Royal Navy was heavily committed on land in the form of the Royal Naval Division, sailors and Royal Marines who fought in the trenches alongside their Army and ANZAC comrades.

To apply for a free ticket either for a position in the march or for a place in a reserved viewing area, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/marketing-relevant-national-events-and-ceremonies/supporting-pages/centenary-of-the-gallipoli-campaign?343>. The site also features details on how to trace your family history to see if you are descended from a Gallipoli combatant.

Applications must be received by February 20.

HERE BE DRAGONS



Pictures: LA(Photos) Keith Morgan, Guy Pool and Gaz Weatherston

FOR to be precise. Three big and grey. One small and golden.

The battleship grey trio comprised the biggest visit to Britain by the Chinese Navy in history.

The golden dragon was part of a large, colourful and very loud ceremonial welcome for the task group... one day after they actually arrived.

The 'lovely' British winter – buckets of rain, very strong winds – meant amphibious flagship Chang Bai Shan (pictured below), frigate Yun Cheng and the replenishment ship Chaochu all entered Portsmouth Harbour 24 hours earlier than planned.

So the traditional oriental welcome organised by Britain's Chinese community – 200-plus families waving red flags large and small, dragon dancers and a band of cymbal clappers and drummers (whose incessant rhythmic soundtrack mostly drowned out the musicians of the Royal Marines) – went ahead with the ships already safely alongside in the naval base.

They gave 18th Expeditionary Task Force commander Rear Admiral Zhang Chuanshu and Chinese Ambassador Liu Xiaoming a reception more normally reserved for pop and film stars – but then this was only the third visit by the People's Liberation Army Navy to the UK in the force's 75-year history – all of them since the turn of the 21st Century.

Admiral Zhang's force spent four months in the Gulf of Aden on counter-piracy patrol – waters also patrolled by HMS Northumberland and now HMS Kent – before departing just before Christmas to pay a goodwill visit to Europe.

The ships' stay in Portsmouth was a mix of high-level talks on various topics affecting both navies – the head of the RN Admiral Sir George Zambellas visited the task group before heading to China for a tour of the PLAN, including a look at its new aircraft carrier, the Liaoning – and less formal sporting and cultural events.

Sailors from the two navies challenged each other to badminton and basketball.

The Chinese visitors toured HMS Victory, Warrior and the Mary Rose and, bringing the RN story bang up to date, the newest warship in the Fleet, destroyer HMS Duncan.

"Our visit to the UK is a good opportunity to enhance our understanding of each other. It's a great opportunity for our sailors to get exposure to local people and our counterparts in the British Navy," said Admiral Zhang.

"All sailors share something in common. We share the same sea, the same international obligations such as dealing with piracy."

Ambassador Liu added: "This visit gives a flavour of the partnership between China and the UK. It is



Seaman Soldier Biao Li poses next to Duncan's LWtr Maxine Cooper on the destroyer's flight deck

also good for the British public to understand the Chinese military and what it is able to do. It has been seven years since our last visit.

"The world has changed and so has the reach of the Chinese Navy. We've carried out 48 missions in the Gulf region in that time and helped to protect 6,000 vessels.

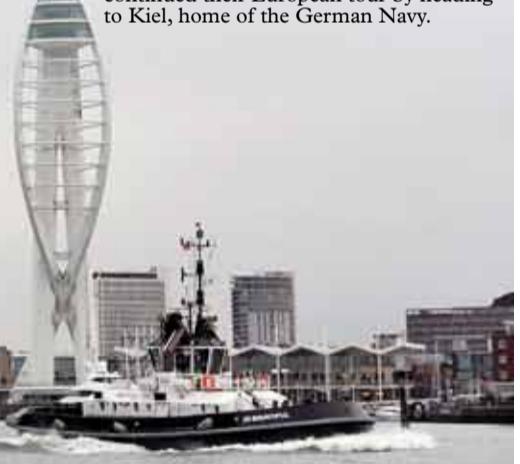
"So we have a lot to talk about – there is a lot for the two navies to share. And this visit will go a long way to strengthening our relationship."

Cdr Jeremy Rigby, Portsmouth Naval Base Commander, said the five-day stay in his base offered "a really good way for us to talk, navy to navy, with like-minded sailors."

He continued: "China, like us, relies on trade at sea for its prosperity and we work together around the world."

"As with our ship visits abroad, these visits are not only of great diplomatic significance, but also very useful militarily given that we share similar global challenges including counter-piracy, preventing conflict, protecting our citizens overseas and supporting UN peacekeeping efforts."

After its visit to Portsmouth, the Chinese continued their European tour by heading to Kiel, home of the German Navy.



Walker fame for Portland's sailors

IF YOU'RE going to go hunting submarines, learn from the master...

Sailors from HMS Portland pose next to the statue of legendary U-boat killer Capt 'Johnnie' Walker during their ship's four-day visit to a rather chilly Liverpool.

With the Navy's senior sea-going submarine hunter in charge of her, Capt Simon Asquith, Portland leads the way in anti-submarine warfare in the Surface Fleet – and as the commanding officer is former skipper of HMS Talent, he knows how the 'enemy below' thinks.

Walker died in 1944, exhausted by the strains of the Battle of the Atlantic – he's credited with destroying more than a dozen U-boats while during one week in 1944 his group of hunters sank six German submarines.

Nearly half a century later, a statue was erected in his memory at Liverpool Pier Head – Walker and his group operated out of nearby Bootle – so it was a short pilgrimage for Portland's underwater warfare department to make from their berth at the cruise liner terminal.

LS(UW) John 'Scouse' Goodwin from Liverpool said: "It's great to visit my home town with Portland."

"Portland is a great anti-submarine warfare ship so it was pretty special to have the chance to pay our respects to one of the greatest anti-submarine legends of all time."

Capt Asquith added: "Liverpool played a vital role in supporting the Royal Navy during the Battle of the Atlantic so it has been great to return in such a state-of-the-art anti-submarine frigate."

The 'Johnnie' Walker memorial was very moving and commemorates not only the man himself, but all those who lost their lives in the battle of the Atlantic – including the people of Liverpool, Merchant Sailors and Royal Navy personnel.

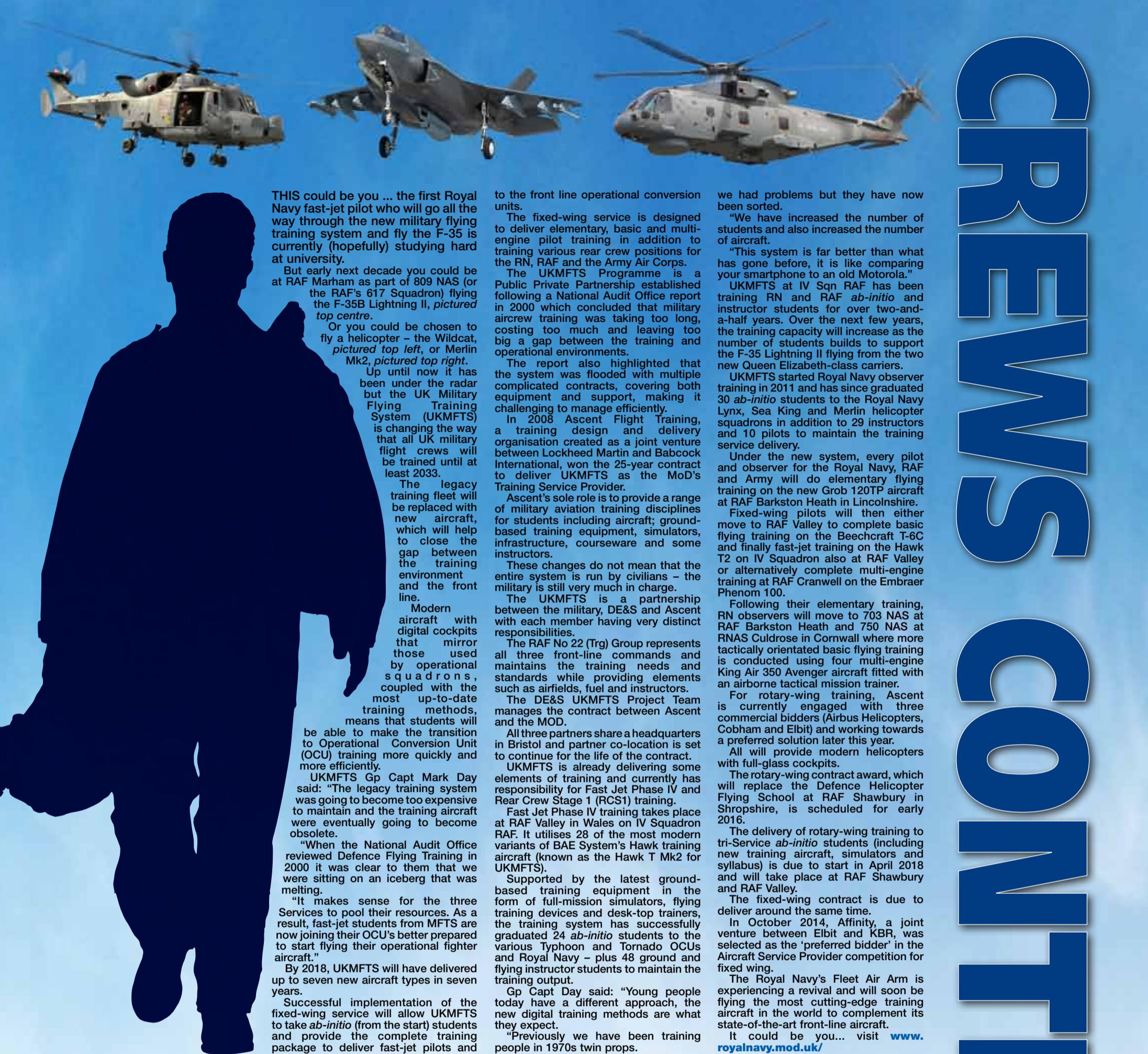
"It was a fantastic visit overall – it's good for the RN and for HMS Portland to maintain our long-standing ties with Liverpool, and allow my ship's company a good run ashore."

Keen footballers took on a team of veterans from Liverpool FC Foundation's Military Veterans Programme at the Club's Academy in Kirkby (the vets triumphed 8-4, for the record).

And the frigate, normally based in Devonport, opened her gangway to potential Naval officers of tomorrow, students from local schools and colleges and Sea Cadets from across Lancashire, Cheshire and Merseyside.

She also hosted local VIPs for a demonstration and ceremonial evening, at which the Royal Marines Corps of Drums, Merchant Taylors School choir and mezzo soprano Danielle Thomas also performed.





THIS could be you ... the first Royal Navy fast-jet pilot who will go all the way through the new military flying training system and fly the F-35 is currently (hopefully) studying hard at university.

But early next decade you could be at RAF Marham as part of 809 NAS (or the RAF's 617 Squadron) flying the F-35B Lightning II, *pictured top centre*.

Or you could be chosen to fly a helicopter – the Wildcat, *pictured top left*, or Merlin Mk2, *pictured top right*.

Up until now it has been under the radar but the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) is changing the way that all UK military flight crews will be trained until at least 2033.

The legacy training fleet will be replaced with new aircraft, which will help to close the gap between the training environment and the front line.

Modern aircraft with digital cockpits that mirror those used by operational squadrons, coupled with the most up-to-date training methods, means that students will

be able to make the transition to Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) training more quickly and more efficiently.

UKMFTS Gp Capt Mark Day said: "The legacy training system was going to become too expensive to maintain and the training aircraft were eventually going to become obsolete.

"When the National Audit Office reviewed Defence Flying Training in 2000 it was clear to them that we were sitting on an iceberg that was melting.

"It makes sense for the three Services to pool their resources. As a result, fast-jet students from MFTS are now joining their OCU's better prepared to start flying their operational fighter aircraft."

By 2018, UKMFTS will have delivered up to seven new aircraft types in seven years.

Successful implementation of the fixed-wing service will allow UKMFTS to take *ab-initio* (from the start) students and provide the complete training package to deliver fast-jet pilots and multi-engine pilots and (some) rear crew

to the front line operational conversion units.

The fixed-wing service is designed to deliver elementary, basic and multi-engine pilot training in addition to training various rear crew positions for the RN, RAF and the Army Air Corps.

The UKMFTS Programme is a Public Private Partnership established following a National Audit Office report in 2000 which concluded that military aircrew training was taking too long, costing too much and leaving too big a gap between the training and operational environments.

The report also highlighted that the system was flooded with multiple complicated contracts, covering both equipment and support, making it challenging to manage efficiently.

In 2008 Ascent Flight Training, a training design and delivery organisation created as a joint venture between Lockheed Martin and Babcock International, won the 25-year contract to deliver UKMFTS as the MoD's Training Service Provider.

Ascent's sole role is to provide a range of military aviation training disciplines for students including aircraft, ground-based training equipment, simulators, infrastructure, courseware and some instructors.

These changes do not mean that the entire system is run by civilians – the military is still very much in charge.

The UKMFTS is a partnership between the military, DE&S and Ascent with each member having very distinct responsibilities.

The RAF No 22 (Trg) Group represents all three front-line commands and maintains the training needs and standards while providing elements such as airfields, fuel and instructors.

The DE&S UKMFTS Project Team manages the contract between Ascent and the MOD.

All three partners share a headquarters in Bristol and partner co-location is set to continue for the life of the contract.

UKMFTS is already delivering some elements of training and currently has responsibility for Fast Jet Phase IV and Rear Crew Stage 1 (RCS1) training.

Fast Jet Phase IV training takes place at RAF Valley in Wales on IV Squadron RAF. It utilises 28 of the most modern variants of BAE System's Hawk training aircraft (known as the Hawk T Mk2 for UKMFTS).

Supported by the latest ground-based training equipment in the form of full-mission simulators, flying training devices and desk-top trainers, the training system has successfully graduated 24 *ab-initio* students to the various Typhoon and Tornado OCUs and Royal Navy – plus 48 ground and flying instructor students to maintain the training output.

Gp Capt Day said: "Young people today have a different approach, the new digital training methods are what they expect.

"Previously we have been training people in 1970s twin props.

"We have had issues, 15 months ago

we had problems but they have now been sorted.

"We have increased the number of students and also increased the number of aircraft.

"This system is far better than what has gone before, it is like comparing your smartphone to an old Motorola."

UKMFTS at IV Sqn RAF has been training RN and RAF *ab-initio* and instructor students for over two-and-a-half years. Over the next few years, the training capacity will increase as the number of students builds to support the F-35 Lightning II flying from the two new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers.

UKMFTS started Royal Navy observer training in 2011 and has since graduated 30 *ab-initio* students to the Royal Navy Lynx, Sea King and Merlin helicopter squadrons in addition to 29 instructors and 10 pilots to maintain the training service delivery.

Under the new system, every pilot and observer for the Royal Navy, RAF and Army will do elementary flying training on the new Grob 120TP aircraft at RAF Barkston Heath in Lincolnshire.

Fixed-wing pilots will then either move to RAF Valley to complete basic flying training on the Beechcraft T-6C and finally fast-jet training on the Hawk T2 or IV Squadron also at RAF Valley or alternatively complete multi-engine training at RAF Cranwell on the Embraer Phenom 100.

Following their elementary training, RN observers will move to 703 NAS at RAF Barkston Heath and 750 NAS at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall where more tactically orientated basic flying training is conducted using four multi-engine King Air 350 Avenger aircraft fitted with an airborne tactical mission trainer.

For rotary-wing training, Ascent is currently engaged with three commercial bidders (Airbus Helicopters, Cobham and Elbit) and working towards a preferred solution later this year.

All will provide modern helicopters with full-glass cockpits.

The rotary-wing contract award, which will replace the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury in Shropshire, is scheduled for early 2016.

The delivery of rotary-wing training to tri-Service *ab-initio* students (including new training aircraft, simulators and syllabus) is due to start in April 2018 and will take place at RAF Shawbury and RAF Valley.

The fixed-wing contract is due to deliver around the same time.

In October 2014, Affinity, a joint venture between Elbit and KBR, was selected as the 'preferred bidder' in the Aircraft Service Provider competition for fixed wing.

The Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm is experiencing a revival and will soon be flying the most cutting-edge training aircraft in the world to complement its state-of-the-art front-line aircraft.

It could be you... visit www.royalnavy.mod.uk/madeintheroyalnavy



● Fast-jet and helicopter pilots and observers will be trained on modern digital systems under the new UKMFTS programme



A Formidable act of remembrance

WITH their banners lowered in reverence a host of standard bearers from across the veterans' community join members of today's Naval Service to remember 547 men lost in a Naval tragedy in Lyme Bay.

Exactly a century to the minute that some of the victims of HMS Formidable were laid to rest in Lyme Regis, 130 people gathered for a service of commemoration.

In 1915, the Dorset town became the focal point both of rescue efforts – and a nation's grief after the battleship was torpedoed in Lyme Bay.

Most of the battleship's crew went down with the ship, but some of her survivors – plus some of the dead – were brought ashore in Lyme Regis, whose inhabitants provided all the care they could.

Six victims of the tragedy were buried

with full military honours in the grounds of Lyme Regis Town Cemetery – the focal point of the centenary service of commemoration, organised by the Royal British Legion.

Naval Regional Commander Cdre Jamie Miller was fittingly joined by six sailors from Plymouth reservist unit HMS Vivid – Formidable was largely crewed by reservists from the city – Lyme Regis' mayor Cllr Sally Holman, Royal British Legion standard bearers from across Dorset as well as Liverpool, 12 standards from various Royal Naval Association branches, and members of the Western Front Association as the Rev Jane Skinner led the act of worship before wreath layings.

"There was a much larger turn-out from the public than we'd expected – the

ceremony really brought the community together, which is fantastic," said Cdre Miller, who survived the sinking of HMS Coventry in the Falklands.

"The centenary of World War 1 has really got traction and galvanised a lot of people. It's also brought many long-forgotten stories of heroism and tragedy, such as the Formidable, back to life."

Also present were relatives of some of the Formidable men lost – Stokers William Eley and Alfred Draper, ERA Louis Wyers, Bosun William Gosney and Lt Trevor Tatham – plus the great grand-daughter of one of the survivors, LS Aaron Norris.

"Since being interred in 1915, these men have never been forgotten and are honoured at a grave-side ceremony every Remembrance time as much sons of Lyme as those who were killed that

came from the town itself," said former LET(WE) Vernon Rattenbury, who lives in Lyme Regis and has researched the town's Great War dead.

Formidable was an aged battleship on patrol in the Channel when she was torpedoed twice by German submarine U-24 barely two hours into 1915.

She went down in a little over two hours, about 35 miles from Lyme Regis.

Some of her crew were rescued by the light cruisers HMS Diamond and Topaze as well as by the trawler Provident from Brixham.

More than 70 men took to the battleship's sailing pinnace, which drifted away in the darkness.

The boat was soon swamped with water which made it difficult to row for those who could, as they had to bail sea water continuously with their boots. It was 11pm on New Year's Day before the

boat reached Lyme Regis.

Of the 71 men originally in the boat, 48 were brought ashore alive, six were dead, and three men subsequently died. The rest had succumbed to their ordeal in the Channel and had been buried at sea by their shipmates.

The dead brought ashore were laid out in the cellar of the Pilot Boat inn which acted as a makeshift mortuary.

The landlord's dog, a half collie called Lassie, began licking the body of one of the victims, AB John Cowan, and nuzzling him... until he came back from the 'dead' – and the legend of the life-saving dog was born.

As for the nine victims in the pub cellar, three were repatriated to their home towns, the remainder were interred at the municipal cemetery on January 6 1915 following a service led by the Bishop of Salisbury.

Horror of Hartlepool bombing recalled

ON A fine winter's day on the north-east coast of England Cdr Steve Jermy saluted 130 souls killed exactly 100 years earlier when the German Navy pounded British towns.

At first light on December 16 1914, the guns of the Kaiser's fleet opened up against Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool – which suffered the worst damage and heaviest casualties.

More than 1,000 high-explosive shells rained down on Hartlepool and neighbouring West Hartlepool (the two towns have since merged) as the Germans tried to entice the Royal Navy out of harbour and pick off some of its vessels.

And off battle the Royal Navy tried to do. Cruisers HMS Patrol and Doon plus submarine C9 attempted to leave harbour. Patrol was hit by two 8in shells and driven aground, while the Germans had gone by the time C9 and Doon reached open waters.

The battle of Hartlepool lasted barely 50 minutes, but left 119 inhabitants of the two towns dead, 500 injured, 20 casualties on the RN vessels, and the first British Servicemen killed by enemy action on home soil during the Great War.

Theo Jones of the Durham Light Infantry was killed while manning the guns of Heugh Battery, which opened fire on the German ships in what proved to be the sole battle fought in Britain in the 1914-18 conflict.

Jones' name was one of 130 read out by pupils from St Aidan's Primary School – where the soldier had been a teacher before WW1 – who also planted 130 ceramic poppies from the recent Tower of London display and 130 wooden crosses as a new monument was dedicated to the victims of the German raid near the Headland Lighthouse.

Representatives of the four military organisations which lost personnel in the barrage – the Royal Navy, the Durham Light Infantry, the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery – laid plaques at the memorial.

Two buglers from the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Scotland heralded the start of the moving ceremony to unveil the memorial, which features a plaque celebrating the actions of one of the cruisers and HMS C9 trying to engage the enemy.

Footsteps follow first submariner VC

AMID the hubbub of shoppers on the penultimate weekend before Christmas, there was a moment of calm reflection to remember the heroics of the first submariner to win the Victoria Cross.

Twelve days before Christmas 1914, Lt Norman Holbrook guided tiny HMS B11 through a dozen miles of Turkish defences and sank the battleship Mesudiye, guarding narrows which led ultimately to the heart of the Ottoman Empire.

Exactly 100 years to the day, the officers' relatives gathered in the heart of his hometown of Southsea to see a memorial stone unveiled – one of hundreds being laid across the land over the next four years for Great War VC winners.

Four generations of the Holbrook family – more than 110 people, including the officer's 92-year-old niece – gathered for a celebration of his life and deeds, before the unveiling of the memorial slab outside Southsea Library in Palmerston Road.

His great great niece Samantha Axtell, who organised the reunion, said she hoped the memorial slab and other anniversary events would remind people of the deeds of her ancestor and his comrades.

"Norman Holbrook was an ordinary man who – except in Australia – has been largely lost to history. The events in Portsmouth, at the Submarine Museum and earlier this year at his old school Portsmouth Grammar, puts that omission straight," she said.

"Norman was one of eleven siblings, five of whom fought in World War 1 and were decorated – they were known as the Fighting Holbrooks."

"It is essential that we look to this generation and the sacrifices they made and understand why it is an important part of valuing our freedom and democracy."

Today's breed of submariners represented the Silent Service at the memorial unveiling, led by Cdr Andy Green, Executive Officer of Portsmouth Naval Base.

"As a fellow submariner I was privileged to be among descendants of Lt Holbrook at this important event which marks an incredible feat of bravery,"



he said. "It is important that his gallantry is remembered in this way and for future generations to learn about his actions."

Norman Holbrook's HMS B11 was one of only the third generation

of submarines built for the Royal Navy, crewed by just 15 men and armed with four torpedoes.

Holbrook guided her beneath five rows of mines before launching a torpedo at the aged battleship Mesudiye south of Canakkale.

The Turkish crew saw B11's periscope – and the torpedo – but were unable to avoid the latter. They did manage to open fire on the submarine, which came under sustained attack for several hours from various craft.

The battleship capsized inside ten minutes, but most of her crew were rescued by teams who cut through her upturned hull.

As well as being awarded Britain's highest military decoration, Holbrook became

an instant hero of the Empire, featuring on cigarette cards, postcards and other morale-raising ephemera, while the inhabitants of Germanton in Australia renamed their town after the submariner.

Holbrook's crew honoured him by crafting a mock Victoria Cross – the real one was presented by George V in October 1915 – which was shown to the submariner's relatives when they visited the RN Submarine Museum in Gosport ahead of the stone unveiling.

Born in Southsea in 1888, Norman Holbrook attended Portsmouth Grammar School – who honoured him last autumn with a memorial plaque – and joined the Royal Navy in 1905, leaving 15 years later. He was recalled when war came again in 1939.

Away from the Senior Service, he raised Guernsey cattle in Midhurst, West Sussex, gardened and enjoyed fishing. He died in 1976 and is survived by his second wife Gundula, who lives in Innsbruck, Austria.

He was the second sailor to win the VC in the Great War. Capt Henry Ritchie was decorated for leading a daring raid in East Africa – and was honoured 100 years on with a slab outside the Scottish Office in Edinburgh in November.

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'Now we stand together'

IN THE seemingly endless grey wastes of the South Atlantic drift eternal symbols of remembrance – and reconciliation – of the war at sea.

Ninety miles off the islands which would give the battle its name, this is the site of the Royal Navy's greatest victory in more than 100 years.

Here, on December 8 1914, the marauding East Africa Squadron of Admiral Graf von Spee met its nemesis – an overwhelming force of British battle-cruisers and cruisers dispatched to hunt down and destroy the Germans.

That they did – and expunged memory of defeat five weeks earlier when Spee had routed a Royal Navy squadron off the coast of Chile.

A century on and as they did at Coronel, so today's generation of sailors paid their respects to the heroes of the first Battle of the Falklands.

Descendants of the three naval commanders most associated with the twin battles – the ill-starred Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, who went down with his flagship HMS Good Hope at Coronel, Graf Spee and the man who hunted him down, Vice Admiral Sir Frederick Doveton Sturdee – gathered in the distant islands for centenary commemorations.

In conditions typically Falklands – lots of wind, four seasons in one day – events were held both ashore and at sea to remember nearly 4,000 souls who died in

the two clashes.

Falklanders mark each December 8 as 'battle day', but the 100th anniversary of the victory was on a grander scale.

"Remembering the Battle of the Falklands is important for islanders as it's such an important part of our history," said Phyl Rendell, member of the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly.

"2014's commemorations were all the more important, marking the centenary with representatives from the Graf Von Spee, Cradock and Sturdee families."

A service of thanksgiving was held in Stanley Cathedral, before a new memorial wall was unveiled – in addition to the long-standing monument to the men of 1914 – and personnel stationed in the islands paraded behind the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth along the Stanley waterfront.

Among those marching, AB(SC) Dan Perks, who serves aboard the Falklands' present-day patrol ship HMS Clyde.

"Despite the weather throwing up some challenges hundreds of people turned out for the commemorative events," he said.

"This really drives home the message that every life is valuable and it is down to us to remember those who fell and not let their losses be in vain."

Shipmate Std Maxine Richardson added: "Taking part in Battle of the Falklands commemoration events was a humbling experience when we consider how many young lives were lost 100 years ago."

Ten Britons were killed on December 8 1914, while four German ships and 1,871 Matrosen – matelots – went down, including Graf Spee and his two sons.

"It was a really emotional moment to be at the site of the battle; back then our nations were at war but now we stand together," said Emanuel Graf von Spee, the admiral's great great nephew, who joined ice patrol ship HMS Protector for the ocean wreathlaying.

"I cannot begin to imagine what the situation must have been like 100 years ago especially when you consider that these admirals knew each other personally but still had to go to war against one another."

"Today is nothing about nationalities or enemies. It is about the memory of the sailors. It is just a peaceful memorial."

Herr Spee's feelings were echoed by Protector's chaplain the Rev Keith Robus, who spoke at both the cathedral service and the wreath ceremony aboard the survey ship.

"Each side was afflicted by loss, sacrifice and injury; each side had moments of defeat and victory and each side also had its own share of soul searching," he said.

Protector's Commanding Officer, Capt Rhett Hatcher, added: "This poignant commemoration marks 100 years since those battles and despite being enemies through two world wars, Germany and the UK are now strong allies working side by side."

pictures: la[phot] jay allen

"Truly we had avenged our sister ship..."

"AT 12.55 the Inflexible fired the first shot at distant enemy. Our men gave a great cheer which made the heart feel glad," so recorded an unnamed sailor aboard cruiser HMS Kent as the Battle of the Falklands began on the afternoon of Tuesday December 8 1914.

The cruiser should have been at Coronel – she was ordered to join Admiral Cradock's squadron on war's outbreak, but was diverted to hunt down a solitary raider, the cruiser Karlsruhe.

When the German ship blew up as it steamed for Barbados in early November, Kent was ordered south to resume the hunt for Graf Spee.

When battle was joined, Kent's crew were eager to avenge the crew of their sister ship Monmouth, like HMS Good Hope sunk with all hands.

"Everyone was full of joy at the prospect of a good fight," the crewman recorded. "It is hard to describe my feelings at this time. Thoughts of danger never came along. No-one gave danger a thought I think. Every man and boy looked as happy and pleased as sand boys out for a lark."

While the battle-cruisers Inflexible and Invincible dealt with Graf Spee's most powerful vessels, SMS Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, the slower Kent the opening hours of the battle mostly as an observer as she sought to catch up with the Germans.

By 5.30pm, however, Kent was locked in a duel to the death with



Graf Spee's squadron struggles through heavy seas as it rounds Cape Horn while (right) crew of HMS Kent pose next to damage left by one of SMS Nuernberg's shells.

Pictures: Imperial War Museum

the Nuernberg – the ship which had sunk the Monmouth.

"The crash and din was terrific. First our broadside going off and shaking our bodies to pieces and deafening, choking and blinding us; then the shells from the enemy, some hitting us and bursting, poisoning us with awful smoke. Shells were screaming past us. As they whizzed through between the bridge and the deck I could feel the displacement of the air. Shells went through our funnels and everywhere. One came on the forecastle, tore through the deck, crumpling and tearing steel plating as though it were paper."

Fortified by a couple of stiff whiskies washed down with soda water, the sailor observed with a mixture of glee and horror as Kent pounded her quarry with all nine of her guns at a range of just

2,800 yards "and nearly every shell found its mark."

After an hour, the Nuernberg was a blazing hulk – but her crew would not strike the colours.

Do you surrender? Kent signalled.

No response. Another broadside. Now the Britons could see their foe jumping overboard, "clinging to all sorts of things that would float – hammocks, boxes, planks".

One of the Nuernberg's sailors taking to the Atlantic was one Stoker Rasch, who grabbed a hammock.

"The First Officer, Kapitänleutnant von Buelow, stood by the railings at No.4 gun, without a jacket, ankle-deep in water. He led three cheers for the Kaiser. Throughout the Nuernberg it now became quieter, for those who were still alive had got away,

while those already frozen stiff in the water were carried by the waves.

Our ship had suffered terribly at the hands of the English shells. The forecastle was mostly shot away, the funnels were full of holes like a sieve, especially the foremost one. The bridge and charthouse as well as the entire forecastle were on fire. Half the flag was left on the cutter davit."

The sight of the Nuernberg in her death throes, wrote the Kent crewman, "was one of absolute awe, yet she turned over and sank as peacefully and as gracefully as would a cup in a basin of water. Those who went with her were 'game' to the end. We saw a party of her men standing on her poop deck waving the German Ensign (tied to a staff) and they went under with the ensign still in their grasp."

Despite her boats being riddled with shrapnel, Kent patched them up and lowered them to rescue the few survivors, including Stoker Rasch where he overheard the cruiser's Executive Officer remark: "I hope my men know how to die so heroically if it should come to the end one day!"

It was only now that Kent's crew learned the name of the ship they had pounded for nearly two hours.

"Truly we had avenged our sister ship the Monmouth," the crewman wrote with satisfaction.

"Thank God I am British. Oh! That the Kaiser had been here, what tortures he should have had."

Lynx flight's sacrifice remembered

SAILORS aboard HMS Portland paid their respects to the darkest hour in their ship's history, ten years after four of their family were killed.

On the night of December 8 2004, the frigate's Lynx helicopter crashed into the Channel, killing all four aircrew of 229 Flight from 815 Naval Air Squadron.

A decade on and today's Lynx flight attached to the ship - 210, from the same squadron at RNAS Yeovilton - joined the ship's company for a service of remembrance.

"This tragic event is still very much remembered within the squadron and the ship," said Lt Dave Fleming, 210 Flight Commander.

"I am proud to be Flight Commander in HMS Portland and be able to pay tribute with the ship's company to the efforts of the crew of 229 Flight to save a crewmate."

On Wednesday December 8 2004, Portland had been conducting an anti-submarine training exercise off the Cornish coast when her sister ship HMS Montrose reported a man overboard.

Portland scrambled her Lynx Mk3 to help the search effort in the darkness.

About an hour later, it crashed into the sea off the Lizard, killing all four men aboard, while the man overboard subsequently proved to be a false alarm.

"It is vital that we continue to remember those who pay the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country," said Capt Simon Asquith, Portland's Commanding Officer.

Commemorations aboard Portland, which was on patrol in UK waters, were mirrored at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church of St Bartholomew at Yeovilton attended by personnel from the neighbouring air station.

The memory of the four men also lives on in the form of the Osprey Trophy which recognises the greatest contribution made by one of the many Lynx flights 815 NAS operates to front-line operations.

The steam works again

AFTER a three-year hiatus steam is back on the training menu for submarine engineers undergoing instruction at HMS Sultan in Gosport.

Although the Surface Fleet stopped steaming along with the demise of HMS Fearless, the Silent Service is propelled through and below the waves by steam turbines.

Live steam training at the home of marine engineering stopped in 2012... but has been reintroduced because nothing beats the real thing.

In the fittingly-named Watt hangar, a Collins Walker ELV12 Steam Generator has been installed and connected to a network of tailor-made pipes.

The 440-volt generator produces up to ten bars of steam for various training purposes, including general valve work, diagnostics and repairs.

It will also be used to enhance water purification and distillation training.

"This is an important development at the school as it means that we can bring real steam training back into the syllabus allowing our submariners to get their 'hands hot' once more," said Cdr Adrian Wheal, Sultan's Commander Marine Engineering.

(Extra) helping hands

YOU can't beat the feeling of completing training.

Up to 18 months of learning, shadowing, marching, classroom time, some more learning.

Time to put all that education into practice. Join a ship, be part of a company, do exciting things on the front line, sail the world, experience a bit of life.

Or work on one of the gatehouses. Show visitors to Drake a health and safety video. Basically anything other than what you trained for.

Because sometimes junior ratings coming out of training - or experienced ratings awaiting their next draft, for that matter - can find themselves in a general manpower pool and asked to plug whatever gap needs filling that particular day.

But not if you're an engineer - marine or weapons - sent to HMS Drake. You're plucked out of that general pool, tools thrust into your hand and sent off to one of the ships in the base.

It sounds simple - and obvious. But until just a few months ago, it didn't happen.

That was before Devonport's senior engineers decided to make better use of junior sailors assigned to the naval base and set up the dedicated Ship Support Engineering Team to give them gainful employment.

"It doesn't seem right doing anything other than this - this is what we were trained for. Why should we be working on a gate somewhere?" says ET(WE) Harry Thorne who was assigned to the new team.

He and upwards of 30 other fellow engineering technicians - the number rises and falls depending on the output of the training establishment and needs of the Fleet - come under the tutelage of three reservists, enticed back into the Service full time to pass on their knowledge and experience.

Collectively, CPO David Oakley and POs Mark Warricker and Steve Bullen have more than 80 years of experience fixing things in the RN.

"If you join the Royal Navy as an engineer, then you want to be doing some engineering, not some other job," says PO Warricker.

"If you're in a general pool you're just a number. Here we're looking at their careers, talking to them, passing on advice."

CPO Oakley adds: "Engineers want to get the grey matter going, they want the challenge of fixing something. Here they are not marking time, they are getting a satisfying job."



● PO Steve Bullen helps a junior rating with a 4.5in shell aboard HMS Sutherland whose refit's final stages has benefitted from the extra manpower from the new Ship Support Engineering Team while (below) the senior rating imparts his knowledge when it comes to some of the gun's complicated electrical systems

Pictures: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, FRPU West

"It relieves some of the burden on the ships when they come alongside - and it gives our engineers much more meaningful employment.

"If you go into a general pool, then you don't really benefit. Here you're learning something every day, things that you are going to use throughout your career."

One of those junior engineers, ET(WE) Kieron Hart, agrees: "We didn't know what to expect, but now we realise that it's actually been pretty beneficial."

Since forming in the autumn, a clutch of Devonport-based ships have made use of this engineering pool - and the feedback has been positive.

From HMS Somerset: "Pleasure to have." From her sister HMS Portland: "We would not have been able to complete half the work."

And for CPO Robbie Roberts, chief of the 4.5in gun section aboard HMS Sutherland in the final stages of refit, the extra manpower has been "an absolute godsend".

He had the engineers fixing ammunition boxes, cleaning



pipes, clearing up any defects and generally providing his team with extra pairs of hands.

"For us it's a 'win win'. Everybody benefits," says the Fighting Clan senior rate. "We get extra bodies, they get the experience. A lot of the guys have not been to sea, so thanks to their time on here, they've got to know the ship."

The watchword from the

head of the Devonport flotilla's engineering arm, Capt Peter Coulson, is "keep it simple" when asking for or employing the team.

"We cannot change the world - we're not here to replace ship's companies or contractors," he explains.

"But we can change the waterfront, helping hard-working ship's companies with some of their day-to-day business."



End to watch the Purdey

LIFTING off from the standings at Yeovilton for the very last time is one of the Fleet Air Arm's longest serving aircraft, retired after 35 years' service.

Painted in the distinctive livery of the Black Cats display team, its home for the final four years of a varied career, this is XZ692, surplus to requirements as the Lynx helicopter force undergoes transformation to the new Wildcats.

This particular Lynx was delivered to the Navy's aerial arm from the nearby Westland works in Yeovil in the summer of 1979 as a Helicopter Maritime Attack Mk2 and initially assigned to Type 21 frigate HMS Avenger - hence the helicopter's original callsign Purdey (after Joanna Lumley's New Avengers character).

Since then it's flown from a clutch of destroyers and frigates as part of the ship's flight assigned by its parent squadron (most recently 815 NAS), reading like a who's who of the late 20th/early 21st-Century RN: Brilliant, Charybdis, Sirius, Lancaster, Marlborough, Newcastle, Exeter, Portland, Montrose, Cornwall.

Over its three-and-a-half-decade career, XZ692 has undergone numerous modifications to keep pace with changes in the war in the air and sea, finally converted to the apotheosis of the Lynx, the Mk8.

After 7,325 flying hours - that's more than 43 weeks airborne - XZ692's final flight was a quick 50-mile hop up the A303 to the Army Air Corps base at Middle Wallop, where it will be dismantled to provide spare parts for the remaining Lynx fleet, due to be phased out by 2017.



42's SAR turn

FROM old friends departing to new arrivals...

Dropping in at 'RNAs' Bickleigh, this is the first visit by RAF Search and Rescuers to the Royal Marines' base just outside Plymouth - as pictured by LA(Phot) Joel Rouse, 42 Cdo.

For the foreseeable future the home of 42 Commando will serve as a temporary landing site for rescue helicopters ferrying casualties and patients to Derriford Hospital, three miles from Bickleigh.

The green berets offered their football pitch as a landing ground after the hospital lost the use of their previous site at the nearby University of St Mark & St John.

Sea Kings are too large for the hospital's own landing site - although a £2m plan was announced in September to build a new pad to accommodate larger helicopters.

In the interim period, Sea Kings from Chivenor-based 22 Squadron (A Flight) and, to a lesser extent, the red and grey rescue helicopters of Culdrose's 771 NAS, will be using the Bickleigh field, with an ambulance transporting casualties over the final leg of their journey.

'A chaplain is extremely important...'



● The Rev Brown leads a service of thanksgiving in St Bartholomew's, the Fleet Air Arm Church in Yeovilton

Picture: PO(Phot) Mez Merrill, CHF

Sydney's famous Harbour Bridge - he cites his favourite post as working with HMS Raleigh, helping to turn civilians into sailors.

"It is a place with a real buzz," he said, "and there is a chance to affect people and see them come to faith. There were 55 confirmations there last year for example which is more than the Bishop of Truro had in his whole diocese.

Despite the foreign deployments - and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to abseil off

"There are qualities that I have learnt in the Royal Navy that I know I will take with me - punctuality and discipline for example - because that is something we take for granted in the Armed Forces and I know that will stay with me.

"And then there is the camaraderie, as you can see someone after four or five years and you are still friends despite a huge time gap. It is the way of the

Service life."

In an increasingly secular society, he believes there's still a key role for chaplains in the RN - 15 are seagoing with three assigned to overseas posts in the US, Gib and Bahrain.

"Having a chaplain is still extremely important," said Rev Brown.

"Commanding officers of deploying ships always request one. They perform an important role on board which is that of confidant to both the ship's company and also the CO, which can be a lonely role."

"Church is always well attended at sea - people tend to go who otherwise wouldn't go at home, and for a variety of reasons. Perhaps a family member has passed away and they want to reflect or they may enjoy the time in a different environment with their shipmates."

The Rev Brown has now returned to his home in Scotland where he and his partner Colin run a B&B.

Taking over as Chaplain of the Fleet is the Venerable Ian Wheatley, an Anglican archdeacon.



● From left: A/Lt Cdr Douglas over Virunga National Park en-route to a field mission; Families of surrendered FDLR rebels wait to be processed by UN staff at Kigogo; A/Lt Cdr Douglas admires the scenery



Bringing hope to a troubled nation

HE asked for a deployment with a difference – and certainly got it. Merlin air engineer officer **Lt Jason Douglas** (promoted to Acting Lt Cdr for this mission) looks back on his six months as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

DID you know that DRC, formerly Zaire, is the size of eastern Europe, was the original source of the Ebola virus in the 1970s and has some of the largest mineral resources on the planet?

Sadly, the country has been in a state of war or internal conflict for the past 18 years. The troubles in the region are synonymous with genocide, murder, kidnap and brutality, with over 5.5 million Congolese killed since 1998, according to the International Rescue Committee.

This has necessitated the deployment of the largest, most complex and enduring United Nations peacekeeping force ever.

These are some of the facts that I quickly uncovered after my appointer informed me that I had got my wish for ‘an operational appointment with a difference’.

So what was I doing, the only matelot, and an Air Engineer Officer to boot, landlocked in the DRC with a force of 20,000 UN troops?

My role was the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Relocation, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDR) Military Liaison Officer to the 3rd Force HQ.

My job involved moving around the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda to conduct a variety of missions such as: the inspection and verification of surrendered weapons and munitions; intelligence gathering on illegal armed groups and surrender negotiations with rebel leaders.

I was based out of the city of Goma on the eastern side of this vast country. The city is dominated by the active 3500m Mount Nyiragongo volcano, which destroyed 15 per cent of the city in 2002. Throughout my time there the city was on a heightened state of alert in case of further eruption.

Travel around the country is challenging to say the least. The few roads are in very poor condition and 4x4 vehicles are required for any road convoy movement – think off-road driving experience and you’ll be on the right ‘track’. Some areas were so remote that helicopter was the only means of insertion or extraction.

The thing that struck me most was the overwhelming number of *kidogo* – child fighters under the age of 18.

These (predominantly) young men grew up in the jungle and had only known a life of fighting and hardship.

Their moral compass is all-too-often non-existent and sadly, rape, kidnap and murder is reported on a daily basis.

Many of the young women in the rebel groups have been kidnapped into marital slavery and were desperate to escape their captivity and live a normal life.

As a father of three, I found this particular area of my work difficult and humbling and I could not even begin to comprehend the level of suffering that these children and their parents had been, and continued to live through.

Without doubt the most rewarding mission during my time in DRC was when I led the co-ordination and extraction of 500 surrendered rebels and their families, including newborn babies, from a remote jungle location at Kigogo.

The smiles on their faces and the sense of pride that I felt when they left the jungle for a new life will never leave me.

Although my work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was potentially dangerous

and often conducted in remote locations, it exposed me to the deepest and most underdeveloped areas of a country which is stunningly beautiful in topography, rich in wildlife, and has unsurpassed mineral wealth.

I also managed to take time out for a day’s jungle trekking and got within 10ft of a wild silverback gorilla, pictured left, and his 38-strong family.

During my limited spare time in Goma I was also able to help out a local orphanage by teaching basic English and press-ganging work colleagues into donating cash for schooling, medical supplies and sports equipment.

This particular tour turned out to be one of the most challenging, surreal yet rewarding jobs in my 25 years in the Royal Navy.

I gained invaluable exposure to the complexities and ethnic subtleties of multi-national operations. During frequent periods embedded with the local population, I experienced the devastation, suffering and enormous toll that this forgotten conflict has taken on this incredible country.

Despite all of this, I was continually humbled by the irrepressible Congolese determination, warmth and fun-loving spirit. Given the opportunity, I would return there in a heartbeat.



● A/Lt Cdr Douglas with one of his Congolese Army Force Protection teams; below, staff and children at the orphanage in Goma

● Meeting prior to negotiations with an FDLR rebel leader; right, some of the weapons handed in; below, Mount Nyiragongo volcano overlooks Goma

● Rebel weapon verification and decommissioning in





Made in the Royal Navy

A YOUNG man leans back behind the bar in which he works, unable to stifle a yawn.

We have watched sepia and grainy snapshots of Ben's life as he grows from a baby to a (dissatisfied) barman.

Then it all changes – he has a purpose in life. He has signed up to the Senior Service, and as the video continues to roll, we see Ben come of age as a result of a dazzling mosaic of experiences as a rating.

The film ends with Ben returning home and hugging his mum, the voiceover noting "I was born in Carlisle, but I was made in the Royal Navy."

In the closing shot Ben's level gaze and confident body language attest to the truth of his statement.

That is the thrust of the latest recruitment campaign for ratings – *Made in the Royal Navy* – which opened with Ben's television commercial.

The theme is simple – the Royal Navy is not just about ships, aircraft and guns – it's about the experiences that make you grow as a person.

It is about the friends you make, the challenges you overcome, the skills you learn, the places you visit, combining to make you a more worldly, mature

and rounded individual than you were before joining.

This according to the team from Captain Naval Recruiting (CNR) is "a completely new approach for Armed Forces recruitment advertising, marking a shift away from the Armed Forces functional offers such as training and equipment, and focusing instead on the personal qualities that an individual gains."

The campaign, which was launched just after Christmas, directs viewers to a bespoke landing page on the award-winning Royal Navy website www.royalnavy.mod.uk/madeintheroyalnavy, developed by E3, which runs through further stories and provides links with information on careers.

These videos, like Ben's story, were created by London-based marketing and advertising agency WCRS and produced by documentary film maker Max Fisher at Rattling Stick.

Paul Colley, Head of Marketing, Royal Navy, said: "The personal journey and the changes they bring were such powerful ones in young Royal Navy ratings that it seemed to offer the most compelling reason to consider a career in the Royal Navy."

"WCRS's *Made In The Royal Navy* really delivered on this personal journey and brought the massive array of experiences in the RN to life."

Billy Faithfull, Executive Creative Director, WCRS, said: "When meeting Royal Navy people of all ranks and backgrounds over the last eight years, it's always been the personalities and human qualities that have stood out.

"It struck us when we were developing *Made in the Royal Navy* that the most valuable thing The Royal Navy can give you isn't the training, the travel, the experiences, the friendships or the qualifications, but the person you become through these experiences. In short, wherever you are born, you are *Made In The Royal Navy*."

One of the stars of the video series is Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon, currently on deployment in the South Atlantic.

While she was heading south, a production team joined her to capture some of the tasks which the ratings carry out on board – and some of the benefits of 'life in a blue suit', including the chance to stroll along some attractive beaches and take in the sights in exotic locations.

The short films blend shipboard tasks with sights and sounds familiar to the deployed matelot – a Lynx skidding by, a round being loosed from the 4.5in main gun, a night shoot, a casualty evacuation exercise, ceremonial drill, a sea boat flashing by the mothership, by way of example.

And there is the downtime; one subject – Portsmouth-born Stuart – makes the most of the sporting and fitness opportunities afforded by the warship, while Londoner Danny clearly enjoys

● Danny enjoys a stroll along an exotic beach during downtime from his RN duties



● One video shows the change in Ben from bored bartender (left) to confident Royal Navy rating

an ice cream while walking along a sandy shoreline.

The ship's company of Dragon were more than happy to be in the shop window.

POWTR Phillips, a member of the media team, said: "When the Logistics Officer told us that we would be the face of the Navy for the next three years we were all keen to get stuck in and help.

"The ship's media team is formed from sailors from across all of the departments and we

were all able to help give the team a feel for what life at sea is all about.

"I think we did ok and watching the advert makes me want to join up again!"

Boat driver LS(SEA) Tait said: "It was great fun to take the film crew out in the boats – a big part of the shots they wanted to get. It was a chance to show them what the boats can do."

"We did it all, from high speed boatmanship to the basics of

coming alongside. I suppose that we get used to coming alongside a moving warship but I could see that some of the film crew thought this was a bit mad."

Air engineer AET McGovern added: "Flying formed a huge part of the ad and I know that most of the film crew were chomping at the bit to get a go in the back."

"I know the aircrew enjoyed taking them up to film the shots they needed."

New (air defence) course of action

WHILE the results of FOST staff efforts are often obvious – highly-trained sailors or well-honed ships setting off on deployment – some of the organisation's most effective work is carried out very much behind the scenes.

Work such as that carried out by Lt Cdr Tom Rowley, of the Maritime Warfare School (MWS) Air Warfare Training Team at HMS Collingwood, who was responsible for revamping and improving the training programme for joint and combined practical air defence.

Lt Cdr Rowley had attended an earlier version of the course in 2011, but on returning to MWS from sea in HMS Dauntless he used the training experience he

had as a former senior rate sea rider with FOST.

This background experience set him thinking about the sequencing of the Air Warfare Officer (AWO) course as he assumed his post in MWS and the responsibility for the course.

"For numerous and various reasons the sequencing had got out of alignment somewhere," said Lt Cdr Rowley.

"Once the sequencing was straight, then it became blatantly obvious what else needed to be done."

The course was restructured into three distinct phases, and Lt Cdr Rowley sought to widen the range of experience brought to bear from outside the Navy.

By aligning Fighter Controller (FC) and AWO training and culminating both courses with exercises alongside the existing Principal Warfare Officer (PWO) course, duplication was cut and the first phase effectively became a new Maritime Air Defence (MarAD) course, allowing for participation from all three UK Services – both the RAF and Army have air defence roles.

This means personnel with similar roles have a far greater understanding of how their colleagues operate – as Lt Cdr Rowley said: "It's no skin off my nose to have RAF people at the back of the class listening in – in fact they contribute by broadening the discussion, and also learn more about how we do things in the Navy."

The second phase is now designed to soon incorporate select coalition personnel, with the new wider perspective they provide allowing RN trainees to learn their trade with a better understanding of the people, processes and equipment with which they will be working, whether in a UK, NATO or coalition context.

The course now reflects the latest developments in air warfare, as well as the American perspective, allowing better understanding of their procedures and assumptions and better preparing RN personnel for integration with US task groups.

The final phase of the new AWO course is specific to the UK and builds on work which Lt Cdr Rowley started when deployed with HMS Dauntless, making use of exercises with friendly aircraft to develop realistic training.

The RN Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control (SKASaC) community are also now benefitting from Phase 1 of the course – as well as observers supporting training in MCTS they gain valuable wider maritime experience in the process, helping the group as they return to their core maritime role after years in Afghanistan.



● HMS Dragon's sea boat speeds past the mothership



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YOUR VOTE MATTERS
MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN



Quick, run - it's



● Members of HMS Dragon's crew captured some great images of the wildlife, including penguins, seals and sea lion pups

Pictures: LET Richard Parry, WO2 Andrew Stockwell, LS Andrew Bennett and LS Sean Baldwin

S a real dragon

PEEK-A-BOO, there's a Dragon coming towards you...

With her huge motif on her port bow looking resplendent, HMS Dragon negotiates the Patagonian Canals – the first Type 45 to transit the natural path between the Pacific and Atlantic.

Having already navigated the man-made waterway linking the two oceans when she took over Atlantic duties from HMS Iron Duke in Panama, the Portsmouth-based destroyer made the return journey naturally.

It took 24 hours for the destroyer to negotiate the various channels between the islands at the foot of the Americas with the help of two local pilots to guide them.

Given the narrowness of the canals, Dragon was 'closed up' for the passage with extra sailors on duty in key compartments to ensure safe navigation.

Those extra personnel on the destroyer's bridge were treated to sights which were, says Dragon's logistics officer Lt Cdr Andy Bray, "simply beautiful" – and "lots of random weather: rainbows, rain, sleet and fog."

Emerging from the canals, Dragon chose to round Cape Horn after all, toasting another first for her class.

From there it was a 1,200-mile journey across rarely-clement open water to the island paradise that is South Georgia.

There her 200 sailors and Royal Marines found the wildlife populace somewhat 'loved up' – long before Valentine's Day.

Amateur photographers from the warship, normally based in Portsmouth, captured penguins and sea lion pups 'kissing' and penguins waddling 'hand in hand' through the surf during



● HMS Dragon makes her way through the Patagonian Canals; POET (WE) David Blanks dons a penguin suit (no idea why) during the Type 45's visit to South Georgia

the few days spent around South Georgia's 'capital' Grytviken.

The crew, who were greeted by staff from the South Georgia Government and scientists of the British Antarctic Survey, all got the chance to view the wildlife as the ship's seamen specialists acted as 'taxi drivers', dodging the seals in the bay.

Dragon is three months into a deployment to the Caribbean, Pacific and Atlantic, a patrol which has also taken her through the Panama Canal and into Chile for a defence exhibition and Great War commemorations before heading for the South Atlantic.

Her work in the latter involves providing reassurance to the citizens of Britain's overseas territories, including the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, 900 miles to the east.

ET(WE) Thomas Short said:

"As a Falkland Islander myself it was fantastic to come back to the islands with the Navy – I have been excited about it since we left Portsmouth.

"I got the chance to visit some of my relatives during a visit to New Island, not something I ever thought I would do in a Lynx helicopter!"

"I know that all of the people in the Falklands really appreciate these visits by Royal Navy warships."

Just 30 people live in South Georgia – the majority of them BAS scientists monitoring its rich wildlife populace: large

penguin colonies, gulls, petrels, seals and whales (the latter were once hunted here, but now the whaling stations are abandoned).

"The chance to visit South Georgia is simply a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said CPO Simon Geldart.

"It was fantastic to meet the people there, see how the UK is helping to preserve the natural beauty of the islands and to get so up close with some amazing wildlife."

"Of course, we all could not miss the chance to see where Sir Ernest Shackleton died and it was fascinating to see his memorial – so far from home."

Lt Cdr Bray added: "South Georgia is truly a breathtaking place and everyone got the

chance to step ashore and experience its beauty and witness the wildlife close-up. Those seals are fast!"

Heading south at the same time as HMS Dragon was RFA Gold Rover, whose commanding officer Capt Philip Hanton said: "Throughout the outward voyage and whilst in the South Atlantic both Dragon and Gold Rover have become a close-knit team, working together has been fun and extremely worthwhile."

"I look forward to the rest of the voyage and continuing the friendships that both ships have forged."

The crew of HMS Dragon ensured they didn't miss out on Christmas celebrations, despite being 8,000 miles from home.

Thanks to the ship's 'chief elf' Lt Amy Webb, the festivities kicked off on December 1 with a whole-ship advent calendar, ensuring every department received a surprise during the run-up to Christmas.

A German-style Christmas market was held in the ship's hangar, including games such as *Topfeschlagen* (hit the pot) and plenty of *Bratwurst* and *Glühwein* to keep the Atlantic chill at bay.

The marine engineers emerged victors in a best-decorated office competition.

Christmas Eve saw some of the crew visit Grytviken before an evening of festive carols – and the highlight of the evening, a full-length production from the Dragon Dramatic Society – *The Christmas Nativity: a dragon is born in Valparaiso*.

Many of the crew donned their Christmas jumpers to open their presents from home on Christmas Day before enjoying a traditional lunch.

Leading stores accountant Amanda Christopher was among those missing her family but said: "I am very proud to be part of the HMS Dragon team."

"Being in the Royal Navy has taught me a lot. Not many jobs offer me the luxury of travelling the world whilst getting paid."

"Being a mother in the Royal Navy can be very difficult but my son and family members are understanding and very proud of me."

HMS Dragon is due to return to Portsmouth in the late spring.

● HMS Dragon carries out a replenishment at sea with RFA Gold Rover in the South Atlantic



Glamorgan's fallen honoured

ONE Welsh warship honoured another as HMS Dragon paused in the grey wastes of the South Atlantic to reflect on sacrifices made by British sailors in the cause of freedom.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer stopped over the spot where her forebear, HMS Glamorgan, was hit by an Argentine missile nearly 33 years ago, some 20 miles off the coast of the Falklands.

Leading tributes during a service of remembrance for the 14 sailors killed was Paul Engeham, in 1982 the staff communications officer aboard Glamorgan, a County-class guided missile destroyer, also based in Portsmouth.

Both ships were designed to shield the Fleet from air attack, both carry Dragons on their ship's badges – and both ships are inextricably bound with Wales – Glamorgan with her namesake historic county, Dragon with the Welsh capital, her affiliated city.

Dragon's crew gathered on the Type 45 destroyer's flight deck to pay their respects before Mr Engeham cast a wreath into the ocean.

"We lost some really good men that day and I shall never forget the bravery and fortitude of all onboard to get the job done and return to the front line," said Mr Engeham.

"It was a real privilege to pass over the spot where HMS Glamorgan was hit. It seemed fitting to do so in a ship which, like Glamorgan, is at the forefront of Naval technology in her time."

"The entire ship's company of HMS Dragon reminded me of the

special bond between all sailors at sea and I am truly honoured to have remembered my shipmates in such company."

Because Glamorgan didn't sink unlike other ships bombed or struck by missiles during the six-week conflict – six Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and merchant ships were lost – her former crew often regard her as the war's 'forgotten warship'.

Just two days before Argentine forces surrendered, Glamorgan was called upon to provide fire support for the Royal Marines of 45 Commando storming Two Sisters to the west of the capital Stanley.

Having completed her mission, the destroyer began to move away from the coast to rejoin the task force – only to be hit by a land-based Exocet missile.

The impact destroyed the ship's Wessex helicopter in the hangar and the blast killed 14 men. But had the Exocet struck three inches lower, it would have exploded in Glamorgan's main missile magazine – and the resulting explosion would have torn the ship apart. As it was, crew fought for three and a half hours to save Glamorgan, flooding compartments, melting wardroom spoons for welding, using sacks of potatoes to improve stability, while firefighters ignored ammunition 'cooking off' to tackle the blazes.

The ship subsequently returned to Portsmouth for repairs and continued to serve the Royal Navy until she was sold to the Chilean Navy in 1986.



● Paul Engeham casts a wreath into the South Atlantic in memory of his fallen shipmates from HMS Glamorgan



● An artist's impression of how the refurbished Royal Navy building – dwarfed by the Sage building – will look on Tyneside

Image: Dixon Dawson Chartered Architects

New chapter for Calliope

WORK has started on a £2.9m revamp of Royal Navy training centre HMS Calliope on Tyneside.

The site, on the bank of the River Tyne between the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and the Sage at Gateshead, will receive new cladding for the roof and walls as well as a number of new facilities.

The overhaul is being put in place as the RNR unit and the locally-based Royal Marines Reserve Unit Tyne Detachment RMR Scotland, prepare

to merge facilities.

Royal Navy reservists from north-east England regularly use the building on week nights and weekends for training and the revamped headquarters will also receive a new Navy boat store, a viewing deck and mezzanine level with offices, new signs and lighting.

Commanding Officer Cdr Ian White said: "I am extremely excited by the upgrade to HMS Calliope as this will improve our facilities and therefore enhance the quality of training and support that we can provide to our

Reservists as they continue to work alongside their Royal Navy counterparts.

"I am also looking forward to having our colleagues from the Royal Marines Reserves move in with us – we have always had a good working relationship with them and we look forward to building, developing and strengthening this.

"No doubt there will be more opportunities for us to train and support each other and this will also enhance the offering for current and future Reservists."

The current building in which HMS Calliope is housed has been a key feature of the riverside since it was built in 1968 and now sits between key North East cultural sites and luxury flats.

RMR Tyne was formerly based on the opposite side of the river at Anzio House but has been sharing the building with HMS Calliope for a couple of years.

The project to refurbish the building will include an external assault course, new changing and washroom facilities, sleeping accommodation, new gym, and a new boiler room.

The work is expected to take over a year with plans in place to minimise the impact on training.

Cdr White added: "HMS Calliope is in an area with a rich Naval heritage and which has always been a fertile recruiting ground for the Royal Navy and the Maritime Reserves.

"Maritime Reservists from the RMR and RNR units have stepped up to the plate in terms of supporting recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and also ongoing RN operations today."



● Lt Cdr Alan Brockie

Master of art of studying

AN ex-Scotia officer has been awarded the Dean's Medal at the University of Dundee's graduation ceremony.

Lt Cdr Alan Brockie completed a Masters Degree (LL.M) in Healthcare Law and Ethics from the Faculty of Law.

Lt Cdr Brockie began his distance learning degree in 2011, whilst a Divisional Support Officer at the Defence School of Health Care Studies based in Birmingham.

During his first year of legal studies, he concurrently studied for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and completed the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Maritime) at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in Shrivenham.

He completed his Masters degree whilst holding the position of Officer Commanding (OC) Operating Theatres at the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, Portsmouth.

Lt Cdr Brockie wrote the research proposal and conducted a great deal of preparation for his 20,000-word dissertation, whilst acting as Team Leader in the Operating Theatres at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan.

To be awarded this demanding degree with merit is a major achievement and as such, Lt Cdr Brockie was awarded the Dean's Medal.

Lt Cdr Brockie is now the Business Manager at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court.

It's brilliant in Barbados

A CONTINGENT of eleven Royal Navy Reservists spent two weeks aboard HMS Iron Duke – in Barbados.

The deployment, which served as part of the Reservists' professional development, began with a trip in one of the ship's sea boats.

Out in the middle of the Atlantic, the RNR kitted up with lifejackets and helmets to board the Pacific 24 vessel. Normally used for recovery of a man overboard, boarding suspicious vessels or transporting personnel, the exercise demonstrated to the RNR how rapidly the boat can be deployed and its capability.

Part of the RNR training package during their time onboard was to take part in a series of chemical biological radiation and nuclear damage control – CBRNDC – drills.

Every member of ship's company is trained to fight fires, floods and a variety of other incidents which may happen onboard whether the ship be at sea or alongside.

The Reservists were involved in a number of serials onboard to perfect their damage control skills, including specific fire fighting training and getting heavily involved with the whole ship helicopter Crash On Deck Exercise (CODEX).

AB Jensen Shah, who is a student studying for his A-Levels, said: "I am grateful to the ship's company for providing the RNR with some valuable training and amazing experiences."

Of the 11 RNR personnel who joined Iron Duke, seven completed all the training requirements to gain advancement to AB1.

During his first year of legal studies, he concurrently studied for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and completed the Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Maritime) at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in Shrivenham.

He completed his Masters degree whilst holding the position of Officer Commanding (OC) Operating Theatres at the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham, Portsmouth.

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● RNR AB Stuart Hill in full fire-fighting equipment conducting a fire exercise aboard HMS Iron Duke



● RNR ABs assist with casualty handling during the CODEX



● The RNR get involved in sea boat operations

Awards for top trio at King Alfred

NAVAL reservists from Hampshire have been presented with awards by Rear Admiral Dame Mary Fagan to mark their valuable contributions to the Royal Naval Reserve and Naval Service in 2014.

PO Mandy Clegg and AB2 Jack Hopkins learned that they had been named as two of HMS King Alfred's top reservists in the unit's annual awards ceremony.

Leading Naval Nurse Denise Wright, 46, was on holiday in Australia when she learned of her success in receiving the Sussex Award

as HMS King Alfred's Reservist of the Year.

In 2014, in addition to her civilian role as a staff nurse at Winchester hospital, Denise undertook the multiple responsibilities of the Support Manager at HMS King Alfred. She has also delivered specialist medical capability deployed to Cyprus for Exercise Helios Encounter and is actively involved in recruiting and other unit tasking.

PO Clegg, 50, from Waterlooville, was presented with the Southwick Award for her highly valuable support to HMS King Alfred.

In her civilian job, Mandy works for the Office of National Statistics based in Titchfield.

The Wessex award for Best Reservist undertaking Initial Naval Training was presented to 19-year-old AB2 Jack Hopkins from Havant, who has been consistently performing to a very high standard during his Naval training within the unit.

The three awards are named after the historic Naval Reserve Units previously based along the South Coast prior to 1994.



● CPO John Campbell

MBE for airman

A ROYAL Naval Air Branch Reservist has been recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for his dedicated service over four decades in both regular and Reserve Forces.

CPO John Campbell from Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose in Cornwall, has been appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

Over his long and distinguished career John has consistently demonstrated unwavering dedication across a whole spectrum of maritime aviation activities from service at sea to a range of challenging appointments at the Fleet Air Arm's Air Stations, in particular at the School of Flight Deck Operations at RNAS Culdrose.

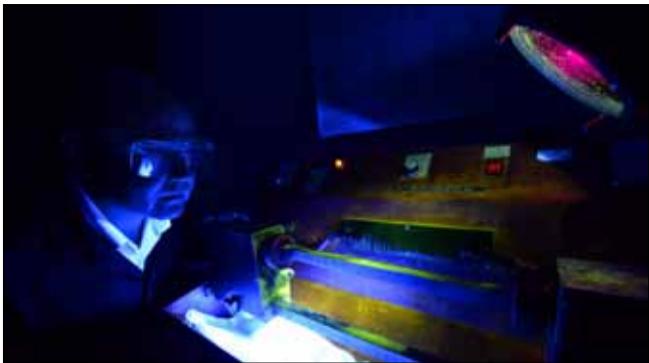
His commitment and loyalty have been truly outstanding. A tireless champion of the use of Reservists in the Fleet Air Arm he is highly respected throughout the aviation community.

His selection as the Chief of the Royal Naval Reserve Air Branch in 2011 was recognition of the immense enthusiasm, determination and innate sense of duty that have been a hallmark of his career.

John said, "I feel very honoured and absolutely delighted to be receiving the MBE."

"Throughout my career I have served alongside some of the best people in the Royal Navy, Fleet Air Arm and the Aircraft Handlers branch – *Nostis In Manibus Tuti* (safe in our hands) – it's a proud moment."

CPO Campbell lives in Coverack on the Lizard with his wife Jane. He has two sons, a daughter and twin grandsons.



● CPOAE Jed Groves uses ultraviolet lights and dyes to check for faults in equipment



● Ian Holmes at work in a laboratory at 1710 NAS in Portsmouth Naval Base



● CPO Alex Trask and Paul Vose at work in a technical office at 1710 NAS



● RAF Sgt Chris Stunt uses a probe in a 1710 NAS laboratory



● AET Kevin Hughes operates a drilling machine



● Charlotte Pope photographing an engine



● AET James Craig undertaking some metalwork

Emergency squadron which never sleeps



IT is not unusual for a Royal Navy ship or unit to claim that it is unique.

Some are strong claims – but few as strong as that of 1710 Naval Air Squadron.

For 1710 NAS has no air traffic control. No runway. No airfield. No pilots.

No aircraft...

What it does have is expertise, allied to cutting-edge kit, which gives the Armed Forces an incredibly useful and – yes – unique resource to draw upon.

There is not much these people cannot handle.

A quick stroll around their facilities, in Portsmouth Naval Base, reveals an assortment of military bits and pieces which the squadron is working on.

Two Challenger 2 main battle tank wheels lean up against a workbench in one of the laboratories.

A broom handle and some plastic clips serve as a prototype for a helicopter gun rack.

Land Rover tyres. Bits of metal. Bundles of wires. Flasks of liquids.

The connection is the ability to take a problem, analyse it, and come up with a working answer – quickly.

“We’re a bit like the AA or RAC breakdown services, reacting whenever a helicopter needs specialist repair skills or techniques to get it flying again” said the Repair Manager, Lt Cdr Simon Peck.

It’s only just after 7am, but already the phones are ringing in 1710 NAS. First to call is the Senior Repair Co-ordinator from one of the 1710 NAS repair teams deployed at sea repairing a Royal Naval Merlin helicopter on HMS Ocean.

Having responded and flown out to conduct the repair only hours after the fault was discovered, the team are now completing the work after just two days and are confirming that a repair officer has been despatched to clear the aircraft for flight.

This team is one of the 13 front-line high-readiness repair teams within 1710 NAS who rapidly deploy across the UK and worldwide, fixing helicopters that are beyond the owning squadron’s ability to repair.

Mid morning the Aviation Forensics team receive a call informing them that a crack has been found on an aircraft component, which is now being rapidly couriered to the squadron to allow the team to study it.

The squadron’s materials investigation and analysis work is typically highly reactive and

being a small, integrated team they are kept very busy with the sheer diversity of forensic engineering investigations, ranging from work on aircraft components and engines through to weapon systems, flight deck paints and ship’s propellers.

The requirement for this support was borne out of the late 1930s when the Admiralty identified a need for maritime focused scientific support.

This led to the Naval Aircraft Materials Laboratory (NAML) being established in 1952, which together with the repair-focused Mobile Aircraft Support Unit (MASU) was to undergo a number of name changes, before some 58 years later these units were combined and formally commissioned as 1710 NAS in 2010.

“The scientists are very proud of the long history of providing specialist support to the Fleet that they are upholding,” said Navy Command’s Chief Aviation Scientist Dr Richard Raistrick.

“As the Naval Service operates across the most demanding environments, most particularly at sea, but also everywhere from deserts to the ice caps and jungles, the need for a specialist Naval unit providing this reactive front-line support has remained critical for decades.”

By late morning another of the scientific teams, the Wear Debris section, has received a delivery of oil samples. This is nothing surprising, given this section receives and analyses over 40,000 samples per year.

The section checks the oil from aircraft to detect imminent failures. Known as Tribology, this work is key for helicopters, particularly when flying at sea where there’s no air station or field nearby to land on in the event of a problem.

Similarly 1710 NAS chemists analyse in the region of 3,000 samples per year, spanning fuels, oils, hydraulic fluids, lubricants and greases, through to forensic chemistry undertaken to support technical investigations into the causes of issues.

As if repair and scientific support wasn’t impressive enough, the squadron also provides a Service Modifications section, to enhance and improve helicopters by adding new equipment, systems and capabilities.

“If you want a GPS in your car you just buy it and stick it on the dashboard. Achieving the same on an aircraft is far more complex due to the rigorous safety requirements for

aircraft,” said the Service Modifications Manager and XO, Lt Cdr Dan Weil.

“Our modifications work also tends to be highly reactive, including meeting urgent operational requirements or mitigating risk to life, such as when an additional gun, radio, or sensor system may be required.”

Rapid prototyping is a key part of this process and hence that afternoon, the section is using its 3D printer to manufacture some test components to help optimise a particular design.

The designers then pass detailed computer-aided design drawings to the 1710 NAS workshops where the squadron’s staff then manufacture a new piece of equipment.

Although by early evening the offices may quieten down, the work rarely stops. The squadron normally works a minimum of a six-day week and the repair teams deployed across the world will often be working long hours seven days a week to get aircraft fit to fly as soon as possible. Equally there is always an on-call scientist available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for emergencies.

The team are currently celebrating as through their work analysing paint degradation on Merlin helicopters and reducing the requirements for repainting, they’ve managed to save an estimated £13m for the RN’s Merlin Mk2 helicopters, and are aiming to save a further £8.5m for the Merlin Mk3 and 3A fleets.

By the end of the day, the repair to the aircraft onboard HMS Ocean has been approved with the aid of the squadron’s metallurgists, composites expert and stress analyst, and is now being readied for the night’s operational tasking.

The remainder of the 12 Repair Teams have progressed repairs on aircraft spread across the world. The Wear Debris section has cleared over 140 samples. Similarly, the POL section has analysed 11 samples, and dealt with a chemical problem with some fuel stored aboard one of the RN’s ships.

The forensics team have also analysed the crack on the aircraft component and confirmed that other aircraft remain safe to fly. Meanwhile the squadron’s manufacturing workshop has turned more of the squadron’s modification design drawings into actual equipment ready to fit to aircraft. Just a snapshot of a typical 1710 day.

■ Meet the team – pages 28-29



● Patric Helbig at work in a laboratory in 1710 NAS.



● Daniel Hendon at work in one of the 1710 NAS laboratories

Vital support given by teams deployed to Afghanistan



● Armed personnel look out as a member of the 1710 NAS repair team works on a damaged Sea King in the field in Afghanistan

ONE hundred and 55 repairs involving eight types of aircraft and 21,000 hours of work – that’s 1710’s achievements during their deployment to Afghanistan.

From 2006 to 2014 the unit deployed structural repair teams – with the peak of work seeing the five-man teams complete 15 repairs in one single month.

Based at Kandahar airfield and then, from 2010, at Camp Bastion, the team dealt with aircraft both in ISAF bases and out in the field.

Their eight-year, or 3,111-day deployment saw them work on Hermes 450 UAS, Merlin, Lynx, Sea King, Apache and RAF Chinooks (which as the workhorse of UK forces accounted for 70 per cent of 1710’s time).

While the ongoing operation resulted in a very high-flying rate, which took its toll on the aircraft, a significant number of repairs were due to small arms fire or ballistic damage.

Holes and bent frames were repaired

using techniques such as skin patches and stringer/longeron (thin strip of material) strapping.

During one task eight external ballistic damage areas resulted in an additional 36 areas of internal damage to aircraft. All repairs were carried out in

theatre – saving the Ministry of Defence an estimated £750,000 – rather than transporting the damaged helicopter back to the UK via C17 aircraft.

Other examples of their work in Afghanistan include:

■ A Sea King Mk4 lost its port forward

undercarriage while landing troops in Helmand Province in July 2008. An emergency landing point was built at the aircraft’s operating base and 1710’s team inspected the stricken helicopter and returned it to the UK for repairs.

Once back in the UK, a separate 1710 three-man repair team spent two months and 560 hours working on the airframe before handing it over for new engines to be fitted. A few months later the Sea King was back in action.

■ A Chinook Mk4 sustained fire damage while landing troops in Helmand in March 2014. Three of five 7.62mm rounds fired at the Chinook hit three vital systems – oil, hydraulics and a control rod.

The pilot opted to stay put, declaring a ‘down bird’. The Chinook Downed Aircraft Recover Team (DART) arrived from Camp Bastion and ordered an aerial recovery of the aircraft. To enable such a lift the main rotor blades and

engines were removed.

Once back at Bastion 1710 faced one of its greatest challenges. The Chinook needed to be towed up a ramp onto a C17 aircraft. Unfortunately the helicopter had lost one undercarriage leg so a new Torsion Box would have to be built in theatre.

Using a cardboard model the new steel box was created by welders and attached to the Chinook. Once on board the C17 the helicopter was securely chained to the deck.

Boeing was so impressed with the work carried out in Bastion they are now looking to manufacture it and market it as a forward undercarriage emergency kit.

1710’s years in Afghanistan allowed the unit to develop its repair processes and specialist techniques. The knowledge they gained will stand 1710 in good stead for specialist structural repair support for future deployed aircraft.

Meet our m



THE staff at 1710 NAS doesn't just include Royal Navy personnel – it also has Civil Servant scientists, engineers and designers.

Within a cadre of just over 50 specialists, the squadron has their own metallurgists, stress analyst, composites expert, as well as forensic engineers, scientists and chemists to name but a few – all wearing different uniforms (hence the use of 'motley').

A few of the 1710 NAS

personnel lined up for a photo at the squadron.

1. Ella Edwards – Registry Support Staff. Manages data, administration and most importantly records regarding 1710 NAS business, including aircraft documentation that reaches back to the 1940s.

2. Daniel Hendon – Tribologist. Specialist in the science of interacting surfaces in relative motion including friction,

lubrication and wear.

Supported by the squadron's materials section, analyses component failure modes caused by wear and provides advice on alternative materials.

3. CPOAET Keith Reynolds – Non Destructive Test. Specialist in non-destructive test techniques including X-ray, ultrasound dye penetrant. Acts as policy advisor and authority for the Fleet Air Arm

regarding design of new techniques.

4. Phil Skinner – Technician and Welder. Provision of specialist hand skills for mechanical workshops including non-standard aircraft welding techniques.

Supports Service Modification production runs in the in-house workshops as well as providing

components for repair teams.

5. CPOAET Ian Maltby – Senior Repair Coordinator. Works on the assessment of structural damage and repair and responsible for delivery of 1710 NAS repair solution in all operating environments including operational theatres.

notley crew



Picture: LA(Phot) Rhys O'Leary

8. for the installation of new aircraft capabilities on behalf of DE&S Project Teams.

7. WO2 AET Tony Fisher – Executive Warrant Officer. Responsible for discipline and morale across the Squadron.

8. Lt Charlotte Roberts – Repair Officer. Fully deployable repair

designer who deploys to the aircraft location to assess the repair requirement, design the repair and on completion assess the quality of repair.

9. Sgt Martin Scrafield REME – Lead Repairer. Fully deployable aircraft repairer with specialist skills deployable across the globe, including support to Arctic operations.

10. AET James Craig – machinist. Service modifications

workshop machinist trained to deliver industry standard components for rapid installation of new aircraft capabilities.

11. AET Kevin Hughes – painter/sprayer. Spray painter trained to deliver high quality finish to components used within service modifications or repairs.

12. Ian Holmes – Wear Debris Analyst. Responsible for checking oil samples for wear debris as part of the Spectrometric Oil

Analysis Programme with a view to predicting early failure of components.

13. Dr Charlotte Pope – Field Deployable Aviation Forensic Scientist. On permanent standby to support aviation incidents and component failures either at crash sites or in the on-site aviation forensics laboratory in order to provide scientific analysis of the incident to the operator, to the manufacturer and to a court if required.



BY TUES

YEH! SHE'S REAL CLASS.
VERY EXPENSIVE THO'
COST ME A BOMB!!
I SENT HER A VALENTINE
CARD- BUT I DOUBT SHE'S
KEEN TO SEE ME AGAIN.



Havana real laugh on HMS Opossum

THIS photograph shows me in the middle smoking a Havana cigar on Christmas Day 1954.

It was taken on the quarterdeck of HMS Opossum while we were alongside in Hong Kong.

At the age of 16 years and seven months I was the youngest rating so was given a rapid promotion to commander for the day.

On the left is Ron Urquhart (first lieutenant for the day) while navigating officer for the day Ken Heap is pictured on the right.

We were among 16 boy seamen on the Swan-class sloop, the others being: Willy Atchieson, Steve Bate, Ben Berger, Fred Furness, Danny Hall, Danny Hayes, Stan Horne, Mick Kneale, Cyril Mason, Billy Moss, Jackie Schoals, Eddie Summerfold, Ron Winmill and Nick Whytock.

Sadly we lost Jackie Schoals, who died in a motorcycle accident outside HMS Vernon in 1956 and Cyril Mason died of cancer in 2007.

I am still in touch with Ben Berger, who runs a jewellery business in the midlands.

I lost touch with Ken Heap about ten years ago, having met



him at a couple of Australian Ganges reunions.

Stan Horne went on to be commissioned but I don't know how the other boys are doing, but wish them well.

The Third Frigate Flotilla's other ships HMS Crane and HMS Modeste had a similar

number of boy ratings.

HMS Opossum left the Far East in 1957 and was transferred to the 7th Frigate Squadron serving in the South Atlantic.

Two years later she again reduced to Reserve and was laid up at Devonport until 1960 when was broken up at Plymouth

on April 26 that year. The name was again used when given to a submarine launched in 1963 and which served until it was paid-off in the 1980s.

Eddie Summerfold
Hon Sec HMS Opossum
Association,
Lancashire

Kept my copy from May 1994

I AM a 92-year-old D-Day veteran. In May 1994 you printed your 50th anniversary of D-Day edition and you printed my story and sent me a copy.

I still have it and looked at it yesterday. In 1994 *Navy News* was 40p and now it is £3.

The men of the landing craft and combined operations don't get much mention now but you would have been in a sad state without us.

Have a look at www.combinedoperations.com

W Joyce
Essex

Visited anchor in Sydney

IN EARLY 2014 I visited Australia where my eldest son lives. He took me on a five-day visit to Sydney to see all of its wonderful sights.

Whilst wandering in that city I came upon this great sea anchor and a gun on a concrete plinth, *pictured right*.

It's inscription read: "This anchor belonged to HMS Sirius. This ship was flagship to the First Fleet. HMS Sirius conveyed the First Fleet to Australia. They sailed from the Isle of Wight on May 13 1787 and arrived at Botany Bay on January 20 1788. Encountering stormy water on Saturday January 26 1788, HMS Sirius was wrecked on March 19 1790 at Norfolk Island where this anchor was recovered through the efforts of Sir F Suttor."

The gun was used for signaling purposes at South Head until 1917 when it too went into retirement. This equipment can be seen at Macquarie Place, Sydney.

One wonders how many times this large anchor was raised from the seabed by muscle power alone.

Mr F Horne
Nottingham



*If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it. Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*, nor can we reply to every one.*

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues. The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and full address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

Told to carry our hammocks on left

REGARDING the photograph of the International Sailor Statue in Northern Ireland in June 2013's edition of *Navy News*.

While doing Naval training, first Skegness, Great Malvern then Chatham, we were always told to carry our hammock on our left shoulder and, get used to it, kit bag on right side.

The reason for this was when you go aboard ship you drop the kit bag, salute and ask permission to come aboard.

I will admit when I was in the Navy we were never that *Posser*.

Alex Kerr
Ex-HMS Kenya
Ontario, Canada



• The International Sailor Statue

River-class are vital

RE: The article 'The Forth is with us' in the November issue of *Navy News*.

Surely we need the new River-class ship to be able to relieve a destroyer or frigate from duties in the Middle East.

The larger ship can then be used for their design intent, protection and escort of the new carriers.

The Americans seem to have one cruiser, two destroyers and an anti-submarine screen as part of their carrier groups.

That would take four of our escorts out of other duties (two Type 45s and two Type 23s).

There is one frigate in refit

another working up after refit and one on standby in the UK. That does not leave many for other duties.

In build the River-class should have air-conditioning installed capable of operation in the Middle East and maybe the gun up-rated to a 3" Oto Malara.

The only problem I can see is the permanent stowage of a helicopter. Perhaps a drone could be carried.

We need these three extra vessels until at least the Type 26 comes along.

C J Pantrey
Ex REA/WEA 1 (Cold War)
Devon

True leader knew me

IN August 1954 I reported to HMS Pembroke, Chatham, to enlist in the Royal Naval Reserve.

My class leader was PO Ron P'Alastere. He was a true leader and very professional.

About 23 years later I was a patrol sergeant with Northumbria Marine Division when I was called to HMS Soberton at North Shields.

The officer in charge was Lt Cdr P'Alastere and lo and behold he recognized me saying: "Chatham in the fifties."

I followed his career through *Navy News* and I believe he rose to the rank of commander in charge of the fisheries protection squadron.

I think he was one of the few if not the first to achieve this rank from the NCOs. Can anyone confirm this?

Peter Forster
North Shields

Cutter belonged to Alaunia

RE: The 'Does our record still stand?' letter in December's *Navy News*.

The racing cutter shown belonged to HMS Alaunia which was a heavy repair ship used as a training ship for engine room ratings before HMS Sultan opened.

The only people I can remember are Fred Taff Hearne, starboard side third from forward, and me David Buster Browne just aft of him.

Fred crossed the bar in July 2014, but we were still friends 60 years after the Alaunia. Best wishes to the rest of the crew.

Dave Browne
Oldham

NAVY NEWS

Mail Point 1-4, Navy Command, Leach Building,
HMS Excellent, Portsmouth PO2 8BY

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Editor: Mike Gray 023 9262 5257 or Mil: 93832 5257

Editorial

News editor:

Richard Hargreaves

023 9262 5255

Production Editor:

Lorraine Proudlock

023 9262 5282

edit@navynews.co.uk

General enquiries and archives:

023 9262 3553/5847

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We also honour RN boys

I READ in a recent edition of the *Navy News* a letter submitted by an ex-Ganges boy GR Palmer.

He is under the impression that the Ganges museum is the only one dedicated to the entry of 'boy' sailors (aged 15) into the RN.

To set the record straight, HMS St Vincent in Gosport took in monthly drafts of youngsters in a similar way to that of HMS Ganges.

Unlike Ganges, St Vincent is still with us, albeit as a college now. Sited adjacent to the main gate (now a grade II listed building), we have a comprehensive museum also keeping alive the memories of the times when 14 and 15 year olds joined the RN as boys.

We have many artefacts from the times our members attended St Vincent dating back to 1929.

HMS St Vincent was in operation in Gosport as a shore establishment from 1927 to 1968. Ganges went on a little longer and was somewhat larger.

Kenneth Cast
Chairman
HMS St Vincent Association

A great read

I RECENTLY started to get the *Navy News* kept back for me at a newsagent in Devizes.

I find it very interesting from cover to cover.

I like the story you did about Remembrance Day. The rest of the stories are all very good. I think *Navy News* is value for money. I also like the little *Navy News* teddy bears.

James Edmonston
Devizes

Feline great to catch up with Navy mews



Each month Pusser's Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter. This month's winner is Jonathan Gibson.

THE post had arrived, which included the latest edition of *Navy News*.

I had finished my lunch when I noticed the cat had jumped on the settee and landed on top of the *Navy News*.

I thought it would make suitable topic for a photograph.

There is a saying "dogs have masters, but cats have servants!"

There is no way Vincent would allow me to put him on the settee so it is a genuine photograph and then I decided I would write a letter as if the cat had written it.

So here goes

Dear *Navy News*.

It goes without saying that I do like your newspaper.

I had just finished eating my lunch, which consisted of two pouches of Felix, and decided to



• Vincent Horatio Walker engrossed in his owner's copy of *Navy News*

walk into the lounge and relax on the settee.

Well what better to unwind than to read the latest edition of the *Navy News*.

I like it even more when I read about my famous feline ancestors: Blackie, Mrs Chippy, Simon, and

even Crusher. Crusher, I believe was the regulating cat of the Regulators of HMS Drake and he even made it to the front page of your newspaper.

I wish you all the best and I am now off to get my head down.

Vincent Horatio Walker Cat

(Vincent after HMS St Vincent; Horatio after Horatio Hornblower; Walker after the late Captain Johnny Walker of Battle of the Atlantic fame)

C/O Jonathan Gibson



• Mr King took this photograph of HMS Amethyst as she passed through the Suez Canal in 1949

Tribute to Amethyst

I AM not a Navy person but on my mother's side of the family they have been connected to the Navy and the Marines since the 19th Century.

I was the black sheep of the family because when I was called up for National Service in 1947 I decided to join the RAF instead, having worked on a farm since leaving school.

I was stationed in Egypt for two-and-a-half years in the

Canal Zone when we heard of the exploits of HMS Amethyst as she escaped from the communist country of China.

(HMS Amethyst, a Black Swan-class sloop was trapped in China for nearly three months after being fired upon by the People's Liberation Army as she made her way from Shanghai to Nanking - known as the Yangtse Incident).

We, from my station watched as she entered the Suez Canal after she crossed the Bitter Lakes and entered at our point

at Deversoir Air Base.

As a tribute to her on behalf of the station, our commander arranged for a flypast to mark her courage.

I managed to take a photo as she sailed past on my old Brownie E camera. For clarity I have had it enlarged. Maybe someone will remember the occasion. It's a long time ago, I am now an 86-year-old pensioner.

Mr L King
Cambridge

What a great job you're doing

I AM a relatively new civilian reader drawn to *Navy News* by an interest in the deployment of existing Royal Navy vessels, and in the development of new ones.

Following a professional life that included North Atlantic sea-time on fisheries research vessels, I am familiar with various aspects of maritime deployment, but what has come as a surprise through reading your most interesting pages is the extent of the contribution that the Navy makes to global humanitarian endeavours.

This role must obviously give a huge boost to the image of Britain in the world at large, and one that is almost certainly under-appreciated by many in the British public.

Even the extensive role of RFA Argus in Sierra Leone received only a modest and short-lived mention in TV broadcasts.

I think that the Navy, and its current top brass, should get much more public credit, not only for the humanitarian work, but for its ambitious diversity policies, for the way that it squeezes such extensive global outreach from diminished resources, and for the cutting-edge design and engineering on display in the Type 45's and the new carriers.

Finally congratulations to the *Navy News* team for the outstanding quality of your depiction of all aspects of the Naval service.

Dr R CA Bannister
Lowestoft

Dad still waiting for his medal

I WRITE on behalf of my father, Sidney Cloke, a veteran of the Atlantic Convoys, including a tour to Russia

He received notification that he is in line to receive the Ushakov medal issued by the Russian Federation.

All the relevant forms were signed and sent some 12 months ago, yet despite my writing to my local MP, and e-mailing the Russian Embassy sadly (all to no avail) dad is still waiting.

And now at 90 time is of the essence.

My enquiry is whether other readers of yours have or are encountering problems?

If they are in receipt of their much-deserved award, how long did they wait?

Is there anything else we could do?

As a family we would be so delighted to see him receive this prestigious award.

Keith Cloke
Folkestone

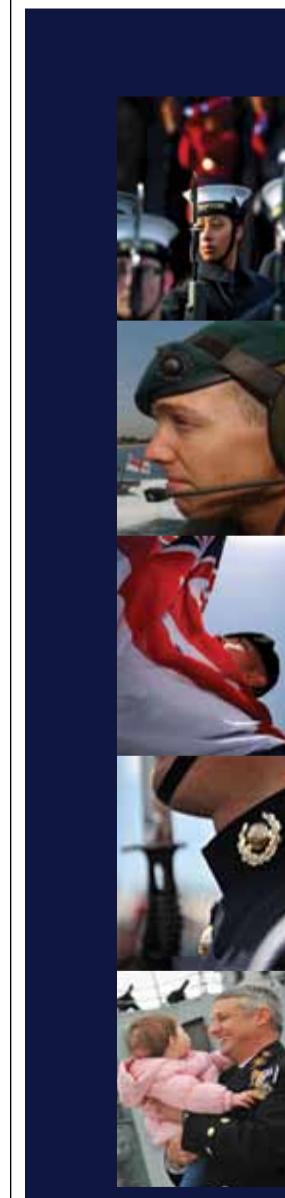
Earlier visitors

RE: Sabre in Basle visit in December's *Navy News*. Two ships visited Basle prior to HMS Sabre and Cutlass in 1979.

The inshore minesweepers HMS Flintham and Dittisham visited on March 31 1969.

They were both used as training ships for HMS Ganges.

BB Hargreaves
Tynemouth



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LONDON, SE1 2JH

Euryalus war link is reaffirmed

SHIPMATES from HMS Euryalus are invited to help their affiliated Army comrades mark the anniversary of a dark day in World War 1.

All who served on board either the Dido-class cruiser or the Leander-class frigate will recall the lively association there has been with XX The Lancashire Fusiliers, all as a result of Gallipoli in April 1915 when the Fusiliers were landed ashore in the cruiser Euryalus's boats.

The landing met with fierce opposition and the Fusiliers suffered hugely – though they managed to achieve the fabled 'six VCs before breakfast'.

The Euryalus boats' crews in the charge of midshipmen were also very much in the fray and their gallantry was recognised by a number of awards.

In Bury, Lancashire, the centenary of the landing is being commemorated from April 24–26, and all who have been associated with the World War 2 cruiser or later frigate are warmly welcomed.

Included in the programme are:

Friday April 24 – black tie dinner plus, for those who do not wish to attend this dinner, an informal gathering for the renewal of friendships made many years ago.

Saturday April 25 – Royal Marines Band concert and an 'all-ranks' gathering.

Sunday April 26 – a parade, church service and march-past followed by a lunch.

Fuller details, which will be updated periodically can be found on www.lancs-fusiliers.co.uk/news/newevents.htm together with application forms for the events.

Details will also be posted on the Euryalus website www.euryalus.org.uk/home.htm

There is much chatter about the centenary on the Facebook page **HMS Euryalus F15 – Old Oppos**, and any shipmate intending to attend is asked not only to contact The Lancashire Fusiliers as above but also add a ditty on this Facebook page.

Rear Admiral John Trewby – a midshipman in F15 1964–5 – has agreed to head the Euryalus delegation, and so far one former Commanding Officer, Cdr Martin Rhodes, has agreed to attend – can anyone provide contact details for any other COs?

The focus of those who have been discussing the centenary has been on the march-past on the Sunday, and even those who avoid marching at all costs are asked to join this one – participants are guaranteed warm applause from Bury bystanders.

Further details and information from John Lean (Euryalus 1964–66) on jblean@btinternet.com or Florrie Ford, who spent seven years in the frigate, on charlesford1@blueyonder.co.uk, or telephone 0191 4234186.

Naval Quirks

THE MTBs OF WWII GREW OUT OF THE CMBS AND P-BOATS OF WWI...



WE CALLED THE GERMAN MTBs E-BOATS, WHY I DON'T KNOW AS THE GERMANS CALLED THEM S-BOATS – "S" FOR SCHNELL OR "FAST."

IT'S NOT AS IF S-BOATS COULD'VE BEEN CONFUSED WITH THEIR SUBMARINE BOATS, AS THEY CALLED THEM U-BOATS, OF COURSE.

WHAT DO YOU FANCY?
HYGIENE CHECK
TODAY'S SPECIALS
TODAY'S SPECIAL
MENU
ANYTHING BUT THE ALPHABET SOUP..

Wake up Hans! You were schnell asleep!

HUNTED IN BOTH WARS BY OUR Q-SHIPS..



● Work is to be carried out to replace a flawed glass panel in the new Naval Service Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, pictured above by S/M Dave Evans. A tiny hairline crack, which can occur in the exacting fabrication process, means the entire panel will be replaced by the manufacturer, while the lettering on the information board and around the stone paving will also be enhanced to make them easier to read in all conditions. General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn said such 'bedding in' issues were to be expected, and that all efforts will be made to ensure the work causes minimal disruption to visitors. The memorial has become a major attraction for visitors, and at busy times the Arboretum positions a guide at the memorial to explain the significance of the symbolism and words

Explosion hero is mourned

A FORMER sailor and "quiet man" whose heroic actions in a deadly situation won him one of the highest civilian honours has died at the age of 83.

S/M Malcolm 'Mike' Hughes, a member of Cardiff branch, joined the Royal Navy at the age of 17, and was drafted to HMS Rook in Gibraltar, first as a Sick Berth Attendant (SBA), then as an Acting Local SBA.

It was while he was in Gibraltar that, on April 27 1951, a lighter loaded with ammunition from stores carrier RFA Bedenham suffered a minor explosion.

The ignition of a depth charge sparked a fire on the lighter, which spread to Bedenham, and despite attempts to douse the flames, within minutes a huge explosion broke the auxiliary in two.

The explosion killed 15 and injured many more.

According to the *London Gazette*, after the first explosion on the lighter, Surg Lt James Sheppard went to the wharf where Bedenham was lying, pulled a badly-burned man from the water and put him in an ambulance.

He and LSBA Hughes were just yards from the auxiliary when the more violent second explosion occurred – the officer was unhurt, while the rating suffered just shock and bruising.

Both continued to help and remove casualties from the wharf.

The *Gazette* noted: "The coolness, courage and devotion to duty shown by LSBA Hughes in the face of extreme danger was outstanding" – and he was awarded the George Medal.

S/M Hughes, described by a branch member as "one of our quietest shipmates", died on November 22, and his funeral at St Cadoc's Church, Llanrumney, was attended by many colleagues.

Homage to VC

PLYMOUTH branch appreciated the attendance of members of the Plymouth and District ex-Service Federation at the annual service to pay homage to Lt George Hinkley VC on New Year's Eve at Ford Park Cemetery.

Lt Hinkley – an AB in HMS Sphinx at the time – was awarded the highest honour for gallantry on October 9 1862 at Fung Wha, China, during the T'ai P'ing Rebellion.

Among the association standards on display were those of the Burma Star, Coldstream Guards, British Korean Vets, RAF, RFA and Merchant Navy.



● From left: David Smith (ex-CRS), Capt David Hart-Dyke, captain of HMS Coventry in the Falklands Conflict, and Paul Goldthorpe, Landlord of the Bat and Ball

Second Mercury plaque

FOLLOWING the unveiling of the first HMS Mercury blue plaque at the Rising Sun pub at Clanfield in October, a second unveiling took place at the Bat and Ball pub, Hambledon.

The intention is to install a series of blue plaques on buildings across the area which played a significant part in the history of Mercury, the RN Communications and Navigation School from 1941 to 1992.

The unveiling at the Bat and Ball, a popular venue for Naval personnel, was conducted by local

resident Capt David Hart-Dyke.

Talks with the Sustainability Centre at the Mercury site itself are well advanced and they are keen to display plaques.

It is anticipated that the next unveiling will happen on Saturday March 14, and there are at least another ten planned.

Those who have registered their interest will be emailed with more details very soon, and anyone else who wishes to be kept informed should send their email address to David Smith at davideosmith@hotmail.com



● S/M Bob Ryder with Lisa Vokorina, of the Russian Embassy in London

Ushakov Medal for veteran

SHIPMATE Bob Ryder of Harrogate and District branch and a former Royal Marine, has been presented with the Ushakov Medal by Lisa Vokorina, an attaché of the Russian Embassy, London.

The presentation was made at the Royal British Legion Residential Care Home, Lister House, Ripon, in the presence of his family, members of the branch, and care home residents.

On behalf of the Russian government and people, Lisa thanked Bob for his help and bravery during the dangerous Arctic Convoys and stated that it was a great pleasure for her to be presenting his medal to him, personally, after his 70-year wait.

Bob, aged 93, replied that he was extremely moved to receive the medal and that he would wear it with pride.

Bob served in battlecruiser HMS Renown on the convoys, and later served in light fleet aircraft carrier HMS Theseus during the Korean War.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ships in our December edition (right) were HMS Dark Adventurer, HMS Dark Biter and HMS Dark Aggressor, and the winning answers were provided by Mr M Kirkham, of Lee-on-the-Solent.

This month's ship (above), a Royal Fleet Auxiliary replenishment oiler, was launched at Birkenhead in the summer of 1975 for a commercial company, but was chartered by the MOD in June 1979.

She played her part in Operation Corporate in 1982, but seven years later was taken up by the Royal Australian Navy.

She was decommissioned by the RAN in September 2006, and eventually broken up in Turkey in early 2010.

1) What was her name when she was in the RFA, and 2) what name did she take when she served in the RAN?

We have removed her name

MYSTERY PICTURE 240

Name
Address
My answers: (1).....
(2).....

Battle remembered

THE anniversary of the **Battle of the River Plate** was marked 75 years to the day with a lunch for more than 150 guests at the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea.

John Garrard and Ted Wicks from **HMS Ajax**, together with Basil Trott and Jim London from **HMS Exeter**, who fought at the battle, were present with their families.

Cdre Jeremy Rigby represented the First Sea Lord, while three civic leaders also attended – the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Cllr Percy Prowse, the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Cllr Steven Wylie and the Mayor of Ajax, Ontario, Steve Parish.

The nations of New Zealand and Uruguay were also represented by Cdr Andrew McMillan, for the New Zealand High Commissioner, and Capt Juan Retamoso, Defence Attaché of Uruguay.

Also in attendance were Stephen and Henry Harwood, sons of Admiral Henry Harwood, together with many members of families of those who fought at the battle, as well as association members.

Jonathan Harwood gave a presentation on the battle, which was followed by a sherry

reception and an Up Spirits.

A Mess Retreat by the Corps of Drums of **HMS Nelson** Volunteer Band preceded lunch.

Speeches were made by Cdre Rigby on behalf of the First Sea Lord, who emphasised that the battle set a standard for the war – a matter of great importance.

In February 1940, in a speech welcoming the return of **HMS Exeter** to Plymouth, Winston Churchill said that “the battle would long be told in song and story.”

In a dinner at the Guildhall in London, after a ceremonial march past King George VI, Churchill said that “in a cold dark winter, the battle had warmed the cockles of the British heart.”

Cdr Andrew McMillan gave details of the celebrations that had taken place earlier that day in Auckland when the Governor General had taken the salute at a march-past by the Royal New Zealand Navy, replicating that by the ship's company of **HMS Achilles** on their return in February 1940.

Steve Parish spoke on how the links with **HMS Ajax** were established – he was proud to mention that his town was the only one named after a warship, and he concluded by presenting



John Garrard with the name plate of the street bearing his name (pictured above) – a procedure the Mayor highlighted when he said the names of the crew who fought at the battle were given to the highways as the town grew in population.

Donald Lamont, a former Ambassador in Uruguay, spoke of his time in the appointment and welcomed the role of Uruguay after the battle.

On completion of the speeches, Stephen Harwood emphasised Cdre Rigby's comments on the importance of the battle at that time, and showed newsreels of the day shot in Montevideo and how the ship's company of the three ships were received in London, Plymouth and Auckland.

This was the third and final event in the 75th anniversary year, and veterans cut a special

cake made at **HMS Raleigh**. Sea Cadets from **TS Hornet** provided a youthful presence.

A special first day cover has been produced, together with a bookmark and anniversary brochure, available from Malcolm Collis on 01366 377915 or Malcolm.collis@gmail.com

A five-course dinner, dancing and the hospitality of the Mess made for a memorable evening.

Dinner for 260

SOME 260 members and guests attended the Plymouth branch annual dinner dance at the WOs & SRs mess, **HMS Drake**.

Sea Cadets from Plymouth Drake unit created a ceremonial ambience to initial proceedings, further enhancing the close relationship that exists between branch and unit.

S/M David Hill proposed the toast to ‘Our Guests’ and secretary Arthur Gutteridge proposed the toast to ‘the City of Plymouth’.

Lord Mayor Cllr Michael Fox responded, and spoke about the importance of the military to the city, in particular the historical relationship with the Royal Navy.

Other guests included serving personnel from **HMS Raleigh Cunningham Division**, Flag Officer Sea Training and the Royal Logistics Corps, and representatives from the Royal Marines Association.

Vice Admiral Sir Andrew Mathews presented an Association Certificate of Appreciation to S/M June Shaw in recognition of her outstanding service to the branch over a period of ten years.

A five-course dinner, dancing and the hospitality of the Mess made for a memorable evening.

Surprise reunion in Nigeria

other in 1974, when Ernest was an AB Radar Operator on board **HMS Undaunted** from the 2nd Frigate Squadron, stationed at Portland, and Norrie was a visiting duty Military Policeman.

Despite the passing of four decades, the two men immediately recognised each other and met up later that evening in the local expatriates' bar for an ‘old sailors’ refreshment exercise.’

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Civilian awarded medal

A Civil Servant from RNAS Culdrose has been awarded an Afghanistan Operational Service Medal.

Annette Brightman currently works as the Chaplaincy Support Officer and is the only civilian from the station ever to receive this accolade.

Annette deployed to Afghanistan in June 2014.

During her time in theatre, Annette managed the flight and accommodation needs of civilian visitors and new employees and ensured that their transit throughout Camp Bastion went smoothly.

She was responsible for issuing personal protection equipment and arranging 'in theatre' flights.

Her report from Afghanistan said that "Annette met the demands of the job working at all hours of the day".

Following her period in Afghanistan, Annette then travelled to the Gulf to help set up a new branch of the Joint Force Service Headquarters.

Fledgling engineers

HERMITAGE Primary School in Helensburgh held a technology challenge with Capt Mark Gayfer, HM Naval Base Clyde's Superintendent Fleet Maintenance (SFM) invited to be one of the judges at the event.

Ten groups of pupils from the school were challenged to create working transport models to demonstrate their technological expertise.

The fledgling engineers had to build a functioning model which could move forwards, backwards, had lights and which incorporated additional technological features.

There was also a marketing aspect to creating their models and each team was given a budget to work within and maintain a team diary outlining the challenges associated with their project.

The winning Primary Seven team came up with an innovative mobile recording studio called u-Pop.

Once Navy, always Navy

Chris Terrill has made nearly 50 documentaries and written three best-selling books about the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines. He has deployed many times to sea on warships, sometimes up to six months at a time, and even trained with the Royal Marines to win his own green beret – the only civilian to have done so. What prompted his close association, some would say preoccupation, with the Senior Service?

I HAVE been making films and writing books about the Royal Navy for over 20 years and continue to do so – it's a fascination and a passion that runs deep.

The fact is I come from a Naval family so salt water was in my blood from birth liberally mixed with dollops of grease and tar.

My great grandfather, Frederick Ernest Terrill, born in 1854, worked as a shipwright in the Naval dockyard in Portsmouth. His son, the fourth of seven children, also named Frederick Ernest Terrill became an apprentice block-maker in the same shipyard at 14. This was my granddad. His older brother William worked in the dockyard as an iron caulk although he was better known as pugilist "Tiger Bill Terrill".

My father, Clive Frederick Terrill, born in 1921, was, like most working-class young men in Pompey, destined to work in the dockyard, but at the age of 18 he had other ideas.

With a gift for the written word and a desire to better himself he won a highly-prized scholarship to study journalism at Portsmouth Municipal College. But then on September 3 1939, war was declared on Germany and my father, without hesitation, applied to join the Royal Navy that very same day. Journalism would have to wait.

"Given my close association with the dockyard," he recalls, "and being a Pompey boy it had to be the Navy but specifically I wanted the Fleet Air Arm."

To his great disappointment he was told that the FAA was oversubscribed for the moment but to standby. My father decided to fill the time before the FAA was ready for him by joining the Merchant Navy. He was taken on immediately as a trainee radio officer.

"Ironically I was sent to



● Chris Terrill with his parents and dog Jenny

Portsmouth Municipal College not for journalism as planned but for a crash course in signaling!"

Meanwhile, 50 miles along the coast in Hove, 18-year-old Joan Shorter, my mother, was working in Hills department store selling lingerie.

My mother had lost her beloved brother Billy, an RAF pilot, in an air crash when she was only six years old so had already experienced the harsh reality of Service life and now braced herself for the inevitable casualties that were to come.

"The boys going to war were all so young but so brave," she recalls with a glisten-eyed emotion undiminished by time.

"And it was not long before I heard that that three of my friends who'd joined Bomber Command had been killed."

Joan changed jobs to work in a library in Brighton but increasingly felt she wanted to do her bit for King and Country. She set her mind on the Woman's Royal Navy Service.

"In all honesty," she admits, "I preferred the uniform and Wrens were allowed to wear silk stockings if they bought them themselves!"

She too was told to wait until vacancies arose.

On his signaling course in Portsmouth Clive passed out near the top of his class. In February 1940 he joined his first ship – a tanker called the John A Brown.

He celebrated his 19th birthday at sea and within a week the Pompey boy who had never travelled before found himself in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to take on a crucial cargo of oil.

In fact he sailed with the Merchant Navy on dangerous Atlantic convoys for two years before finally hearing from the Royal Navy in early 1942 with orders to report to St Vincent

shore establishment in Gosport. Here, at long last, he would start training as a pilot for the FAA.

It was in 1942 that Joan Shorter was also contacted by the Royal Navy offering her a place in the brand new WRNS category of 'maintenance.'

Her job would be to maintain all types of small arms weapons. She jumped at the opportunity, joined up immediately and invested all she could in silk stockings!

After a year at HMS Mercury shore establishment in Hampshire she was promoted to 'Leading Wren' responsible for the maintenance of everything from Sten guns and Tommy guns to revolvers and Lee-Enfield rifles.

My father, showing a great aptitude for flying, took just eight hours to solo in Tiger Moths and under six hours in Harvards.

He got his wings in early 1943 and specialised as a seaplane pilot on Walrus and Kingfishers. Later he was sent to 725 squadron in Northern Ireland, pending call up to fighter-training at Yeovilton. Here he flew everything from Hurricanes to Swordfish.

On December 23 1944, he volunteered to ferry a beaten up old Miles Martinet tug aircraft from Ireland to Cornwall.

"I reckoned it would earn me a spot of Christmas leave," he remembers. "But over the Irish Sea I flew into heavy weather and as I reached the north Wales coast I didn't have the power to fly over the cloud so I tried to go underneath – but I soon found there was no underneath."

He piled into Snowdonia and was seriously injured – mangling his legs, hands but worst of all, losing his right eye. For my father the war was over and what followed was a long period of painful recuperation.

My mother loved the WRNS



● Clive and Joan Terrill fly the White Ensign in their garden



● Lt Clive Terrill



● Leading Wren Joan Shorter

and wanted to stay in after the war but sadly her father died in 1945. She was demobbed on compassionate grounds and returned to library work taking a job in Havant near Portsmouth.

In 1946 Clive, living back in Portsmouth with his parents and still trying to overcome the physical and emotional impact of the crash, was invited to a party in Havant. He turned up and, walked nervously into the party – a moment he will never forget.

"I immediately spied a pretty brunette who was introduced to me as Joan – a former Wren."

My parents, who married in

August 1948, are now a spritely 93 and will this summer celebrate their 67th wedding anniversary.

They live happily together in Worthing with their little dog Jenny (Wren) and remain Royal Navy to the core.

In addition to me they have two daughters, my sisters Rosalind and Debbie, and nine grandchildren.

Some years ago I gave them a flag pole for Christmas so now on special days – like Trafalgar Day, Taranto Day or for family birthdays my father will proudly hoist the White Ensign in the garden.

A: Royal Navy Baseball Cap - Made from 100% brushed cotton, this high quality Baseball Cap is embroidered with the Royal Navy logo and comes in navy blue with a red trim. Available in Adult size, buckle adjuster ensures one size fits all.
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Top training at dad's school

A 23-year-old from Plympton has qualified as a Royal Navy chef and is now ready to feed the forces after training at her father's school.

Chef Grace O'Leary completed her 27-week Defence Chefs Course at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS) within HMS Raleigh.

By coincidence Grace's father, WO1 Chaz Talbot, who has 30 years experience of being a chef, is in charge of the Catering Services Training Squadron at the base in Torpoint.

Both father and daughter were involved in the success

of the Naval Services Culinary Arts Team. The team, with WO Talbot as the manager and Grace as one of the competitors, was the overall winner of last year's Exercise Joint Caterer, the annual Tri-Service catering competition.

Having learned her trade Grace is now ready to put her new skills into practice on board the survey ship HMS Enterprise.

The former pupil of Hele's School said: "I have discovered a real flair for cookery that I didn't realise I had and relish the opportunity to put my knowledge and skills to good effect on HMS Enterprise."



● Chaz and daughter Grace

Father and son reunion at sea

HMS Ocean, the Royal Navy's helicopter carrier, was host to a father and son reunion off the east coast of England.

Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) Officer Cadet Tom Luscombe, currently conducting his Initial Fleet Time on board, was surprised by a visit from his dad, Lt Cdr Mike Luscombe of 854 NAS, when he flew to the ship to conduct deck landings as part of HMS Ocean's aviation workup package.

Tom joined the Royal Navy this year, and is in training to become a warfare officer. Inspired by his dad's 30 years of

Service, he has always been an avid fan of the Royal Navy, the Fleet Air Arm and aviation.

So it is no surprise that Tom wants to follow in his Dad's footsteps and become a helicopter pilot on completion of his training as an Officer of the Watch.

Tom said: "It made a nice change for me to be able to show him around and be the expert on my little piece of HMS Ocean and the Royal Navy and being able to go flying with him was the icing on the cake – it has really confirmed my aspiration to be a pilot in the Royal Navy."



● Tom with dad Mike

Planner honoured

A ROYAL Navy officer was awarded a commendation from the Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach.

Cdr Clarke Brown worked tirelessly as the lead planner for Exercise Trident Jaguar 2014, a validation and certification exercise.

Based at Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO in Portugal, Cdr Brown said: "I am absolutely delighted, especially so in a period of intense transformation for NATO, and I hope my small contribution has supported broader UK interests within the Alliance".

Retiring from the Royal Navy upon completion of his post in Lisbon, Cdr Brown was given a fitting send off by his fellow staff officers from across 11 nations with a final 'deployment' onboard a three-masted sailing ship on the River Tagus.



● From left, Pete Williams, ETME Kane Williams, Percy Furneaux and CPO John Williams

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Lessons from RM

THE famous commando spirit was passed onto a leading rugby club side in the hope of boosting results on the pitch.

Royal Marines from Plymouth's 42 Cdo spent a day with Plymouth Albion RFC.

Under the instruction of the renowned tough Mountain Leaders, the Royal Marines' Arctic warfare experts, Albion players were each given the challenge of dropping by abseil over 100 feet from a railway viaduct on the Plym Valley cycle route near the Royal Marines base Bickleigh Barracks.

The team and their coaching staff were then taught the principles of marksmanship before firing live ammunition from an SA80 assault rifle to test their accuracy on 42 Commando's range.

A Royal Marines spokesman said: "Albion have endured a run of losses this season and 42 Commando were happy to provide some distraction to events on the pitch.

Albion coach James Shanahan said: "42 Commando and the Armed Forces as a whole are important to the city of Plymouth.

"It's great to be invited here to learn a bit about how the Marines do their business."



● ROYAL Navy personnel celebrate completing the Singapore Marathon.
PO Cameron 'Artie' Fraser-Shaw and CPO(ETME) Stu Clapham are both based in the Commonwealth state.

Kane follows in his family's footsteps

A NAVAL family gathered at HMS Raleigh to watch as a 17-year-old from Plymouth became a fourth-generation sailor.

ETME Kane Williams embarked on his Naval career in September, following in the footsteps of his parents, John and Claire Williams, his grandfather Pete Williams and his 89-year-old great grandfather, Percy Furneaux, all of whom were at the training base in Torpoint for Kane's passing-out parade.

Kane, who attended Plymouth College, said: "It's been my dream to join the Royal Navy ever since I was little.

"My dad's done it, his dad did it and my great-grandad did it too. The Armed Forces has been a major part of my life and I wanted to carry on the tradition.

"I've enjoyed HMS Raleigh from the very beginning; working as a team to overcome all the challenges we've faced, from weapons training to completing a 30-kilometre trek across Dartmoor.

"At times it's been very tough, but we've pulled together as a team and cracked on. I feel a huge amount of self-pride knowing that I've completed the first phase of my training and I'm very excited to begin the next chapter of my Royal Navy career."

Kane's father John, known as Bungy, is a serving CPO. He joined the Royal Navy in 1990 and is currently based in Cyprus where he lives with his wife, Claire.

CPO Williams has served on a variety of Devonport-based ships ranging from numerous Type 22 frigates to HMS Bulwark and HMS Enterprise. Claire spent six years in the Royal Navy, leaving in 1997 to start a family.

Pete, Kane's grandfather, who lives in Cornwall, spent 22 years as a chef and his last posting was as a CPO at HMS Raleigh working in the trainees galley.

Percy Furneaux, who lives in Plymouth, was a gunner in WW2 and mainly served on Motor Torpedo Boats in the Pacific. He was also involved in patrols of the English Channel.

CPO John Williams said: "Both my wife and I are extremely proud of Kane for completing his phase one training at HMS Raleigh.

"Sitting in the stands brought back memories of standing on that same spot on the parade ground 24 years ago, trying to block out the pain of the weight of the rifle whilst attempting to stand still.

"Kane has always wanted to join the Services and after his first visit to the careers office his mind was made up to join the Royal Navy.

"After discussions with my father and me he was clearly a natural ETME as he has a keen interest in hands-on engineering and will fit in well socially down the stokers' mess."

Kane's next port of call is HMS Sultan in Gosport where he will learn the skills in marine engineering to keep the ship running smoothly, safely and effectively. Once fully qualified he will work on everything from the ship's hull and engines to its electrical, fuel, hydraulic and fire fighting systems.

Retirement stitched up

SEAMSTRESSES Peggy Caren and Brenda Purchase celebrated their final day at RNAS Yeovilton – after 53 years.

Tailoress Peggy was 23 years old when she began her tailoring career at Yeovilton.

She was joined by Brenda 20 years later and the two have been sewing military uniforms ever since.

Having sewn the uniforms of countless Royal Navy and Royal Marines Service personnel from the very junior up to the First Sea Lord, they have a wealth of knowledge, experience and stories.

Twins engineering careers in HMS Sutherland



● Matthew Titley

TWIN power is helping propel the Plymouth-based Royal Navy warship HMS Sutherland.

Twin brothers Anthony and Matthew Titley, from Shrewsbury, have been embracing their new responsibilities as engineers onboard HMS Sutherland.

The talented twins, aged 23, passed their engineering exams and both joined the Type 23 frigate in July as leading engineering technicians and have been rewarded by advancing on the new fast-track system.

The brothers' individual skills have shone through as a new staffing structure has been introduced by the Navy to give young recruits a larger amount of training and responsibility early

in their careers. HMS Sutherland was the first ship chosen to adopt the new structure and fast-track system that will encourage job satisfaction and continuous improvement.

Matthew said: "Passing the leading engineering course was a huge achievement for both of us. I always knew I wanted to join the Royal Navy. Now I'm a leading hand and I have lads to lead and pass on my experience to."

Anthony said: "The new engineering manning structure for frigates will be a challenge. I've only become a leading engineer technician this year and taking on the responsibilities of a section head is a difficult task, but an exciting opportunity. The learning curve is very steep."



● Anthony Titley

Get fit – and raise money – in 2015

STICKING to a regular fitness regime?

If not, there's still plenty of time to get fit in 2015 whilst also raising money for the charity.

Our *Road to Twickenham* campaign is in full swing, and we're particularly excited to see more local businesses and ex-Servicemen and women signing up.

The challenge – to run, row, or ride the equivalent distance from your home or workplace to Twickenham Stadium before the Army vs Navy match in May – is so simple that anyone can get involved, no matter what your level of fitness. But it doesn't stop there!

We realise what a sporty bunch our supporters are, so we've got a number of charity places at the Great South Run and the Edinburgh Marathon up for grabs – contact us if you're interested in joining our 'run team'.

We're also looking for runners who have their own places in the Great North Run, Plymouth half-marathon or other events around the country and, for those who are more adventurous, we are now working with Action Challenge to host a number of hiking and long-distance challenge events.

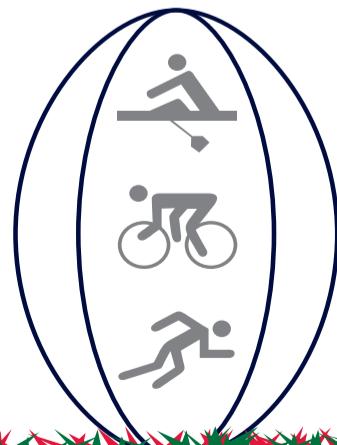
If any of these sporty activities interested you, then please contact our Fundraising Team for more information.

And for those of us who are less sporty, you can support us in other ways this year.

Businesses can nominate us as their Charity of the Year, display our collection tins or host fundraising events on our behalf.

2015 is set to be one of our best yet so thanks to all our fundraisers for your support.

Lauren Wileman
Head of Community Fundraising
The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity



the road to
TWICKENHAM

Charity lifeline for China Fleet Club

A £100,000 grant from the RNRMC will completely refurbish one of the busiest communal areas of the China Fleet Club, Saltash, near Plymouth.

The grant – which represents the largest ever given by the charity – will be put towards refurbishing and renovating the club's entire suite of wet changing room facilities, extending the life of them by at least 15 years, according to the China Fleet Trust.

With a plethora of fitness and leisure facilities, it's little wonder that an often-neglected area of clubs such as the China Fleet are their changing rooms, toilets and showers.

The refurbishment of this facility will match that of its recently-fitted £500,000 Aqua Spa Centre (right) and refurbished gym, and will add considerably to the overall experience for its beneficiaries and members.

Alex Sharpe, Chief Executive of the China Fleet Trust, said: "Although we have invested over £1m in facilities over the last 12 months, this project at over £200,000 was always going to be difficult to fund within the time constraints we had."

"The changing rooms are arguably the most heavily-used area in the club and every new RN and RM recruit to the Service uses these facilities at a very early stage in their training, therefore the need to keep them in the best condition is a priority.

"We are delighted by the generous support from the RNRMC which allows us to carry our improvement works forward, ensuring we can continue to offer our beneficiaries a high-quality facility that remains relevant to them and one, as automatic members of the club, they can be rightly proud of.



All work should be finished early this month.

Following a notable increase in maintenance costs, cleaning and repairs, the plumbing and drainage and air conditioning infrastructure will be the first job to tackle, which will be quickly followed by a complete refit including new-look lockers with digital locks.

The numbers of visitors to the China Fleet Club have increased significantly with the widening of its beneficiary pool, which now includes RN and RM Reservists, former RN and one, as automatic members of the club, they can be rightly proud of.

embedded within RN and RM units and their immediate families.

Recent figures, for example, show that more than around 450 RN/RM veterans have benefitted from the new audience policy, which took effect from summer 2014.

It is estimated that around 3,000 serving personnel, 450 dependents and 1,300 civilians will benefit from the works every year in addition to countless guests from all over the country and business conference attendees.

This project will, during its lifetime benefit tens of thousands of users.

News in brief

■ The Royal Naval Association (RNA) raised more than £15,000 in 2014 having nominated the RNRMC as its Charity of the Year.

A total of 18 branches got involved by running fundraising events and sending in 22 donations through the year. BZ all!

■ Culdrose Children's Swimming Club received a £1,000 grant to provide extra instructor training for its staff.

Contact Culdrose Gymnasium on 01326 552404 for information on how to book lessons.

■ WO1 Mac McLoughlin and Pete Murray-Jones of HQBF Gibraltar raised £335.30, having run tours of the Gibraltar World War 2 tunnels.

The pair undertook the tours voluntarily in their spare time – averaging one tour per week during evenings and weekends – and instead of charging visitors they accepted charity donations.

They are continuing to fundraise for us – thanks guys!

■ A Christmas charity fundraising single – 1914 The Carol of Christmas – sold in aid of the RNRMC, RAF Benevolent Fund and ABF The Soldiers' Charity, broke the hot40uk.com iTunes singles chart in December, peaking at number 34.

Thank you to everyone who purchased a copy.

■ Charity collections will be taken from the crowds on the final night of Sunshine on Leith, performed by the South Downe Musical Society at Ferneham Hall, Fareham, April 23-25.

Tickets from £11 – see www.fernehamhall.co.uk for more details.

Sport (and activities) of Kings Hottest tickets on the street

MORE Naval Service children than ever before will be able to enjoy a summer-time break, thanks to a series of reduced-rate summer camps at naval bases this year, co-funded by the RNRMC.

A grant of £25,600 was awarded to The Kings Foundation – the organisers of the ever-popular Kings Camps – which works with UK and US Armed Forces to provide high-quality sports and activity programmes that inspire and encourage children.

With the arrival of Kings Camps to a number of RN establishments – including HMS Temeraire, HMS Collingwood, HMS Neptune and HMNB Devonport – more Service families have the opportunity to take advantage of the school holiday



activities for 4-17-year-olds and the range of benefits that sports camps can bring to children's lives.

Tom Brown, Business Development Manager at The King's Foundation, said: "The school holidays can be a time when children and young people

struggle to find positive things to do, and they lack structure and purpose.

"However it's widely accepted that children who are engaged in regular physical activity at summer camps enjoy physical, emotional and mental benefits, whilst continuing to develop their skills.

"To date we have provided 4,000 child places at 16 UK and EU Armed Forces bases, and we are looking forward to working with more Service families in 2015."

Kings Camps will be held at selected bases this year.

For more information or to pre-register your interest in these limited Kings Camps programmes, please call 0114 263 2160 or email info@kingscamps.org

PLACES in the Virgin London Marathon are hard to come by, so it was with pleasure that we awarded places to two of our most athletic fundraisers.

Sgt Rob Garthland, RM Stonehouse Plymouth, and LPT Anthony Carley, HMS Collingwood, Fareham, had their names drawn from a hat and were chosen to run and raise sponsorship in aid of the charity. We wish the guys the very best of luck for April 26.

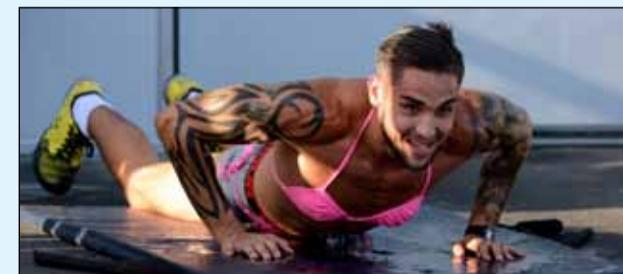
If you've been successful in securing a place in the Virgin London Marathon, or any other running event, and are interested in running for the RNRMC then we'd love to hear from you.

For those yet to have signed up to an event, we have a limited number of spaces available in the Edinburgh full and half-marathons on May 31; the Bournemouth full and half-marathons on October 4; and the Great South Run on October 25. Minimum sponsorship pledges apply.

All our runners will receive a free running vest and fundraising pack. Contact the fundraising team on fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk or 023 9254 8289 for details.

FUNDRAISER OF THE MONTH

LPT PETER OSWALD



WITH the end of a six-month deployment looming, it was payback time for the crew of HMS Defender, who nominated LPT Peter Oswald to carry out as many continuous burpees as possible in aid of the RNRMC. The challenge saw him conduct 335 burpees – the 'club' exercise of choice for the tour – in a row, and evidently in fancy dress (see above), with a £1 donation being made per burpee. Revenge never tasted so sweet!

**GO THE DISTANCE!
MAKE EVERY MILE COUNT!**

You can help us wherever you are in the world by taking part in a run, row, swim or cycle.

Your challenge is to cover the number of miles you are from Twickenham before the Army v Navy rugby game. For example, if you are based in Portsmouth, you could row 80 miles. If you are based in Lympstone you could cycle 180 miles. You could do this individually or as part of a team, with your starting point being your unit, ship's current location or your affiliated town. Raising sponsorship will help your charity care for you, your family and oppos.

Register now and measure up to the challenge! Search 'Road to Twickenham' on the Virgin Money Giving website or contact: fundraising@rnrmc.org.uk T: 023 9254 8289

Registered charity in England and Wales (1117794) and Scotland (SC041898).

rnrmc.org.uk/events/roadtotwickenham

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Charity Snippets

■ HUNDREDS of workers at Clyde Naval Base got into the Christmas spirit by wearing their eye-catching Christmas jumpers for the day – and helped raise over £1,200 for Clyde 1 FM's Cash for Kids Christmas Appeal.

The brainchild of Sub Lt Ian McInnes, the initiative saw both civilian and Service personnel pay to don a colourful array of Santas, snowmen, reindeer and Christmas puddings, with DJs Grant Thomson and Fat Brestovca attending to collect the cash.

■ SAILORS from Plymouth-based warship HMS Sutherland donated dry and tinned goods to the Plymouth Food Bank just in time for Christmas.

LCH Sam Payne, CPO Gavin Tuach and CO Cdr Stephen Anderson delivered the donations to the Oasis Project's Food Bank.

■ THE RN Gunnery Instructors Association raised more than £1,300 for the Dreams Come True charity, which fulfils the wishes of seriously-ill children and young people – anything from meeting a celebrity to providing a piece of equipment to improve daily life.

The charity was chosen after member Mary Timson's granddaughter was the recipient of a laptop given by the charity.

The total of £1,329 was raised at the RNGI President's Charity Night through a raffle, video horse racing and other games.

■ A BLACK tie gala ball at the Limes Country Lodge in Solihull at the end of last year raised more than £3,000 for Help for Heroes.

David Morris, the owner of the Lodge, spent 18 years in the Royal Navy, so the cause is close to his heart.

Some 180 people enjoyed a champagne reception, a four-course dinner, entertainment, raffles, an auction and disco – and tickets for this year's event, on Saturday November 14, are already on sale.

■ A HOSPICE in Somerset is more than £2,000 better off thanks to the efforts of sailors in survey ship HMS Echo.

The ship was away from its Devonport home for 18 months mapping the sea bed of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean, and was diverted away to the waters off Australia to help the fruitless search for missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370.

But the 72 members of the ship's company (48 are on board at any time, the rest training or on leave) dug deep through a series of events such as a village fete – and appropriately enough were able to hand £2,014 to St Margaret's Hospice in Yeovil just before the end of 2014.

■ MILITARY personnel at HMS Collingwood completed the 50-mile Norfolk Trophy Christmas Relay and raised almost £520 for the Rainbow Centre, which helps children with cerebral palsy and adults affected by stroke, Parkinson's, MS and head injuries.

When added to cash raised at other events, including raffles at the Navy Elite Boxing Championships, Collingwood CO Capt Steve Dainton and LPT Scouse Carley were able to hand over a cheque for almost £1,220 just before Christmas.

■ TV presenter and RAF veteran Johnny Ball has officially opened the newly-refurbished Blind Veterans UK Brighton centre – with half of the £2m cost being covered by the Armed Forces Covenant (Libor) Fund which uses fines from banks which attempted to manipulate interbank interest rates.

Johnny, a stalwart of BBC TV show *Play School* and a popular television boffin, is a long-standing supporter of the charity.

Argus extends helping hand

SAILORS, Royal Marines, aviation personnel and medics are stepping up their efforts to help youngsters orphaned by Ebola in Sierra Leone – without leaving their ship.

The 350 Naval Servicemen and women aboard aviation support ship RFA Argus are rowing the distance from the ship's home in Falmouth to Sierra Leone's capital Freetown – donating a day's pay and asking friends and family to donate £1 for each kilometre covered on the machines in the gym.

Argus is home to three Merlin helicopters, supported by Royal Navy, Fleet Air Arm, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary, plus medics from all three Armed Forces, delivering aid to remote communities and treatment centres as part of Britain's commitment to the international fight to stem the tide of Ebola in West Africa.

The row is brainchild of PO(ACMN) Diccon Griffith of 820 Naval Air Squadron, who was struck by the plight of youngsters during flights into Port Loko, one of the worst-affected towns in



Sierra Leone.

"I had the privilege of speaking to many of the children and captured some powerful images using the squadron camera," the senior rating said (see above).

"Each and every face I saw seemed so happy that we were there, many of them quoting the slogan that is seen stickered on many of the UN vehicles out here – 'togeder, we de fet Ebola – together we will fight Ebola'."

The money raised will go to charity EducAid which is setting up two care centres in Sierra Leone for the orphans of Ebola

as well as providing schooling, care and shelter.

"These orphans have seen the worst of Ebola – many of them have seen parents and siblings taken by the virus.

"They've spent months isolated, without any pastoral care of any kind and now need help," said 820 NAS Observer Lt Bobby Crewdson

By mid-January, the appeal had hit the £7,000 mark.

You can add to the tally by giving through <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/rfaargusebolaappeal>

Silence reaps its reward

A SELF-confessed Royal Navy loud-mouth has achieved an amazing feat – keeping silent for 24 hours.

LPT George 'Shiner' Wright embarked on a sponsored silence to raise money for the Children's Happy Hospital Fund, which supports the children's ward at Derriford Hospital.

The enterprising Geordie managed to continue his job at HMS Raleigh as a fitness instructor, using flash cards to communicate orders.

Through his silence and other fundraising throughout the year, LPT Wright raised £1,654, which he delivered to the ward at Derriford along with selection boxes for the children.

He said: "I am known as a bit of a loud-mouth and I can't really help myself.

"Everywhere I go I like to engage in benign chatter about nothing of any real relevance other than to hear my quality Geordie accent. Keeping quiet for 24 hours was hard.

"I'm sure everyone was disappointed that I couldn't



● LPT Wright uses flash cards to communicate at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield

bark orders and missed my inspirational words of encouragement – or maybe they just enjoyed the peace."

LPT Wright was inspired into action after his then baby daughter, Megan, was admitted to the ward on Boxing Day 2010.

This is the fourth Christmas that he has offered his support to the children's ward and his second sponsored silence.

He said: "Megan was rushed into hospital suffering from bronchitis, which was really scary at the time.

"I was surprised to see how

many children spend Christmas in hospital.

"Megan recovered well from the bronchitis, but still suffers from asthma so we've visited the hospital a few times since.

"I wanted to do what I could to make Christmas special for the kids in hospital so since then I've done what I can to support the ward."

Money raised by LPT Wright in previous years has helped to fund new flooring in the playroom and buy new toys.

Play specialist Jo Cross said: "Every year, we are overwhelmed with the kind donations that Shiner brings to the children's ward at Derriford Hospital.

"Not only did he present a cheque this year, he gave us many selection boxes for the children, which brought a massive smile to their faces. We really can't thank him enough for all of his support."

Anyone wishing to sponsor LPT Wright and donate directly to the charity can do so online at: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/ShinerWright>.

829 miles to mark 829 anniversary



DETERMINED to mark the tenth anniversary of 829 NAS operating Merlin helicopters with an event, members of the Culdrose-based squadron set out to celebrate with more than just a party.

Choosing a day when as many personnel from the squadron were back at the air station was always going to be a problem, but a date before Christmas was set and planning began.

They chose also to complete 829 miles by running, cycling (pictured right, in the squadron hangar) and rowing at various locations around the establishment and in some of the larger supermarkets around West Cornwall.

"It was a tremendous effort by the squadron," said Lt Mike Hawkins, of 829 NAS. "We wanted to do something for someone else rather than just having a big party."

"Everyone was enthusiastic and really got involved – it turned into a great team-building

exercise, with all money raised going towards our squadron's chosen charity."

Teams were made up from across the squadron and set out to woo the public at Sainsbury's in Helston and ASDA in Penryn, where their rowing and cycling efforts were added to the 829-mile total.

Another team ran around Culdrose for most of the afternoon (left – no, we are not sure what a shark is doing there either...) collecting money in buckets. Their route finished at Hellitots, the base's nursery, where enthusiastic youngsters threw water balloons at the runners.

The total stands at £3,243.48, and reaping the benefit was Children's Hospice South West – Little Harbour.

In the evening, hosted in the WOs and SRs Mess, the squadron and guests celebrated the occasion with a social event, culminating in a charity raffle.



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PO2 8RN
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Deaths

Rear Admiral David J Cooke CBE. Entered Dartmouth 1973 and completed training as a midshipman on board HMS Fearless (West Indies) then HMS Lowestoft (Far East) before specialising in submarines 1976. Operational patrols in HM Submarines Oberon, Warspite (Navigating Officer), Onslaught as CO (1986-88), Trafalgar and Torbay as CO (1992-94). Also CO of HMS Cumberland (2000-01), MOD Director of Equipment Planning 2001-04, Deputy Commander of Strike Force NATO, Naples 2004-06, COMOPS, Rear Admiral Submarines and Cdr Allied Submarines North 2006-09. Younger Brother Trinity House 1989; Freeman City of London 2008 and Liverpenny Worshipful Co of Shipwrights 2008. Awarded the CB and retired 2009. December 1. Aged 59.

Rear Admiral 'Louis' J H A J Armstrong. Entered Dartmouth from King's School in 1964 and selected to read Law at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he won an athletics Blue. 1974 supply officer on board HMS Zulu and 1975-76 the RN sent him to study at Middle Temple, where he was called to the Bar in 1976. Also served in HMS Ursula, Fife and Intrepid. 1979 became deputy supply officer of HMY Britannia. Played pivotal role in the success of Global 86 deployment by a task group led by HMS Illustrious. Promoted Captain 1987, he spent several years in Whitehall with the Defence and Overseas Secretariat of the Cabinet Office 1987-89. Student at the Royal College of Defence Studies in 1992, commandant of the RN Staff College 1995 and, as a rear admiral, senior Naval directing staff of the Royal College of Defence Studies 1996-97. Appointed CBE 2004 and awarded a companionship of the Institute of Leadership and Management 2013. December 31. Aged 68.

Cdr Frank D Patterson CBE RD RN. Forth Division Royal Naval Reserve. December 19. Aged 91.

Capt David C Hebron. HMS Ashanti, Caledonia, Warrior, Pembroke, Centurion, Nelson, RN College Greenwich, Cinc Nav Home and FOF2 Staff. December 13. Aged 73.

Capt Maurice R C Howlett CBE. HMS Truncheon, Montclare, Narvik, Adamant, Dolphin, Neptune, Osprey, Pembroke, Dryad and Mercury II. December 10.

Surg Capt Humphrey J A Hahn. HMS Ganges, St. Angelo, President, Rooke, Drake, Victory (RNB) and RN Hospitals Malta and Haslar. December 19. Aged 89.

Surg Cdr Herbert Ellis. Naval doctor who took part in medical and physiological experiments which led to the design of the 'bone-dome' for pilots, introduction of underwater ejection seat for pilots who ditched at sea and 'goon suits' to protect ditched crews from hypothermia. Also conducted experiments on G-forces to which aircrue would be exposed when catapulting from carriers. Late 1950s he was sent to the US Navy School of Aviation Medicine where high-gravity experiments were being conducted; he also tested the simulator

for the rocket-propelled aircraft X-15, the precursor of the first American space flights which set speed and height records in the 1960s. He flew more than 2,000 hours in almost 50 types of aircraft including an experimental version of the Meteor which he flew from the prone position. As a result of using himself as a human guinea pig, over the course of his career he suffered a broken neck and fractured vertebrae. Retired in 1959. Involved with the Order of St John for 34 years, first as regional chairman in Gloucester then from 1989-91 as Chief Commander of the Order. Published his memoir *Hippocrates, RN and Why Not Live a Little Longer?* October 4. Aged 93.

Cdr Geoffrey J R Elgar. HMS Agincourt, Ocean, Heron, Daedalus, Seahawk, Fulmar, Warrior and Terror, also MOD Defence Intelligence Staff and 809 and 812 NAS. November 18. Aged 90.

Cdr William D L Morris. HMS Victorious, Decoy, Eastbourne, Blake, Collingwood, Vernon, Nelson, Dockyards Devonport and Malta, also Sultan of Muscat Forces. December 19. Aged 84.

Cdr George Watson. HMS Ashanti, Eagle, Alacrity, Exeter, Southampton, Caledonia, Sultan, Cochrane, RN Eng College Plymouth and Fleet Engineering Staff Portsmouth. December 27.

Lt Cdr Douglas H Clark. HMS London, Urchin, Defender, Truelove, Excellent and MOD Weapons Dept. November 13.

Lt Cdr Brian Holdsworth. HMS Ark Royal, Albion, Ulster, Osprey, Heron and Mercury, also 826, 849, 700G and 829 NAS. October 20.

Lt Cdr Michael H Howland. HMS St James, Solebay, Hermes, Eagle, Daedalus, Heron, Tamar, President, Excellent and Peregrine, also 890 NAS. November 14. Aged 96.

Temp Major John H B Molyneux RM. HMS Fabius (Taranto), RM Division. November 3. Aged 99.

Lt Cdr Frederick J McEwing. HMS Indefatigable, Ocean, Victorious, Seahawk, Ceres, Fisgard and Britannia RN College. November 7. Aged 90.

Lt Cdr Brian H L Braidwood. HMS Bronington, Scylla, Vernon, Terror, Drake, MOD Portland and MOD Weapons Dept. December 13.

Lt Cdr Richard M Lees. HMS Dutton, Albion, Euryalus, Wilkinton, Urchin, Chapel, Reclaim, Venus, Vigilant, Excellent and Ganges. December 22.

Lt Cdr Harry O'Grady. National Service 1947, promoted to officer (SD)(X) (PR) 1958 having served as PO in HMS Crane (Suez Crisis). Later qualified as D, early officer appointments HMS Gambia, Ark Royal, Eagle, 899 NAS (Sea Vixens) and FO Gibraltar. Exploits in 892 NAS (F4 Phantoms) featured in Rowland White's *Phoenix Squadron*. Served HMS Blake and as OIC Aircraft Direction School (twice). D in 899 NAS (FRS1 SHAR) whilst Squadron prepared to deploy to South Atlantic 1982, final appointment at FO Portsmouth retiring 1983. December 27. Aged 86.

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● **Castles of Steel** by Jules George, part of **Weighing Anchor: An Artist at Sea on board HMS Argyll and Tireless**. "With its barbed wire and simple metal construction, the defensive position in the near ground, a relic from 1982, reminded me of a medieval keep, and I found parallels with the towering shapes of the Royal Navy ships in the distance," said the artist

Shades of dark blue on canvas

ARTIST Jules George was granted rare access to join frigate HMS Argyll on deployment in the Falklands, the Gulf and the Med and one trip with submarine HMS Tireless, and the results of those visits can be seen at an exhibition at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

On display for the first time within the Babcock Galleries, Jules's work – almost 60 paintings and drawings – reveals an interest in the activities of the crew as they undertake everyday routines.

The artist had already worked with the Army in Afghanistan in 2010, and in 2011 he was invited by the Royal Navy to experience life at sea.

He made four trips in Argyll, including visits to the Gulf and Indian Ocean in late 2011 and the Falklands and South Atlantic in mid-2013. Jules explored every facet of the crews' work from the engine room to the bridge, joining aircrews and Royal Marines boarding parties – even losing one of his pieces overboard.

Curator Victoria Ingles said: "People are familiar with war art, but seeing this insight into peacetime activity shows a very different perspective."

"This vital work undertaken by the Royal Navy often goes unacknowledged as serving personnel operate in a closed environment, out of the public spotlight."

"We are very grateful to the Arts Council for their generous funding of the exhibition and we are thrilled to work with a contemporary artist of Jules' calibre."

For details of the exhibition, which runs until Sunday March 8, see www.historicdockyard.co.uk/events/event1444.php#sthash.dzT0r2iE.dpuf



● **Bridge (HMS Argyll)** by Jules George. "The bridge was the 'eyes of the ship', and even during the quieter moments of a passage was always a hive of activity," the artist recalled

 **TWO-SIX**

Any questions? Yes, and some answers

THE new year is well under way and enquiries are coming into the office thick and fast. Here are a few we've answered:

I am serving in the Royal Navy. Can I claim Service Pupil Premium (SPP) for my step-daughter?

As long as your daughter meets the criteria of the definition of a Service child, as stated in JSP 752 section 01.0210, then she will be eligible for the SPP.

Section 01.0210 states: "A child is defined as a legitimate or legitimised child or step-child of either or both of the spouses/civil partners; a child statutorily adopted by either or both of the spouses/civil partners; or a child of the family (a legal term meaning any other child who is being brought up in the household of the husband/wife/civil partner at their expense, or was so being brought up immediately before the spouses/civil partners were estranged, separated by legal order, divorced, the civil partnership was dissolved, or before the death of the husband, wife or civil partner). A child is

deemed to be below the age of majority (18 years)."

This is complex. If your daughter doesn't meet the criteria, we'd like to hear from you: admin@nff.org.uk. Visit www.nff.org.uk for information on the SPP.

I am a veteran and am finding it difficult to access social housing because I am deemed not to be a priority. Is this right?

Paragraphs 4.24 and 4.25 of the Statutory Guidance for Local Housing Authorities, state that Local Authorities are encouraged to take into account the needs of serving/former Service personnel when framing their allocation schemes.

They should also give sympathetic consideration to the housing needs of family members of serving/former Service personnel who may themselves have been disadvantaged by the requirements of military Service. Local Authorities can ensure that appropriate priority is provided by:

Using the flexibility within the allocation



President's head on permanent display

HMS President, keep watch!

Father Tom Pyke blesses the namesake figurehead of London's RNR unit – using consecrated water from the Thames – as the historic piece of decorative woodwork is rededicated in its new home.

Historians, Royal Marines musicians, senior RN and US Navy officers were all present as the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers donated the figurehead, 200 years after the action which inspired it.

Off Long Island in January 1815, USS President clashed with the smaller British frigate HMS Endymion – one of the final engagements of the War of 1812 (which actually ran on three more years...).

Her figurehead was spared the breaker's yard and for more than a century was in the hands of the Fishmongers.

The American warship came off worst, was captured and put into service as the fourth HMS President for a couple of years before being broken up.

Her design, however, inspired the next President built in 1829 and adorned with an elaborate figurehead in the image of the second US president, John Adams.

After a lively career around the world, including action in the Crimea War, she became a hulk in London's docklands and drill ship for reservists in the capital until she too was broken up in 1903.

Her figurehead was spared the breaker's yard and for more than a century was in the hands of the Fishmongers.

Now it enjoys pride of place on the drill deck of today's HMS President (the ninth) in St Katherine Docks, unveiled by Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Jonathan Woodcock and the US Navy's Rear Admiral Robert Kamensky, Commander Submarines NATO.

Rear Admiral Kamensky said the rededication ceremony symbolised "the continuing evolution of the everlasting friendship between our two countries."

He continued: "Today our two navies work together, exercise together and fight together. We have bled together, dressed our wounds together and laid our dead side-by-side."

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban, DDC

Untold stories of Victory to be aired

A THREE-month exhibition in the place of her birth is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the launch of the world's oldest commissioned – and most famous – warship: HMS Victory.

Guided by award-winning Naval historian, writer and broadcaster Brian Lavery, the exhibition explores Victory's career, unearthing some surprising and little-known stories from the varied career of Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar.

Twenty two objects have been loaned to Chatham Historic Dockyard from the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich including two impressive models of Victory showing the changes in her construction, a decorative sword, original letters

and plans, plus what is thought to be one of the earliest known representations identified as Victory at the head of the Fleet.

And the Queen has allowed the 'Nelson bullet' to be put on display from the Royal Collection; the single lead musket ball mortally wounded the admiral at his moment of triumph.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is Victory's figurehead on loan from Portsmouth, where the ship herself is in the middle of a major restoration programme.

'HMS Victory – the untold Story' runs from February 15 until May 31 and entry is included in the dockyard's normal admission price.

Plant a tree for Gallipoli

UP TO 100 pine trees are being planted across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight as a living memorial to the men of the ill-planned (and executed) Gallipoli campaign.

Gosport lecturer and King Alfred RNR officer Martin Heighway came up with the idea after researching the conflict for a forthcoming battlefield tour to Gallipoli.

His grandfather landed with the Herefordshire Regiment and Royal Welsh Fusiliers at Suvla Bay in August 6 1915 – the last attempt to turn the tide of battle in the Dardanelles.

As part of the operation, Australian and New Zealand troops launched a diversionary attack further down the peninsula at 'Lonesome' or 'Lone' Pine' (after the 1913 song later made popular by Laurel and Hardy), where the artillery barrage had destroyed all flora save for a solitary pine tree.

After the capture of Lone Pine Ridge, an Australian soldier sent a pine cone home where two plants were eventually produced.

Since then, cuttings and seeds from one of the pines, planted at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, have been sent around the world.

For the Gallipoli centenary year, Martin has obtained a number of these Aleppo pines to present to organisations in Hampshire who would like to plant a tree to maintain a living memorial to those who fought and died.

"Every day I teach young Royal Navy personnel about their proud history, including how some sailors became the infantry of the Royal Naval Division and were involved in some of the bloodiest land battles of World War 1," said Martin.

"I found the idea of extending the Lone Pine metaphor to the modern day enchanting. Young men from the RND sacrificed a great deal: as a tree grows, so may the memory of that sacrifice grow and eventually self-perpetuate."

"Those in Hampshire who receive a memorial pine will be able to maintain a reminder of the Gallipoli campaign, and the part Hampshire played in it."

If you would like to plant a pine contact Martin at hmkingalfred.joto@royalnavymail.mod.uk and follow the project's progress at www.facebook.com/HMSKingAlfred.

NAVAL FAMILIES FEDERATION



can be contacted on 0800 328 7641, or visit www.gov.uk – navigate to the JSHAO pages.

This is an area of interest for the NFF's Armed Forces Covenant Team. If you would like to discuss your experiences with our Covenant Co-ordinators, please e-mail Jenny.ward.covenant@nff.org.uk (for the Midlands and North of England), or Nicola.thompson.covenant@nff.org.uk (for the South of England).

My husband wants a separation. He has booked a march out of our Service Family Accommodation (SFA) and said that I will have to move out with both our children, one of whom is disabled. What happens now?

DIO (the Defence Infrastructure Organisation) has a clear route to support families via their dedicated Irregular Occupancy Team: 0800 169 6322. The guidance confirms that you will

need to speak to your local Housing Officer to discuss options.

We suggest you also contact the local Citizen Advice Bureau for legal assistance, and perhaps approach a solicitor. See pages 20-21 of the winter edition of our Homeport magazine (via www.nff.org.uk) for details on what happens when a marriage breaks down and you live in SFA.

Contact NFF

■ 023 9265 4374/admin@nff.org.uk/Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN. Or visit www.nff.org.uk for news, our free, quarterly Homeport magazine and monthly e-update.



Initial success for ETs Faraday

THE first new Engineering Technician Initial Career Course (ETICC) have passed out from HMS Sultan, writes WO1 Sharky Ward.

The revised ETICC has increased the level and quantity of technical theory and practical 'hands-on' training. This is based on the competences in the Individual Competence Framework.

To accompany their arrival in the Fleet an RNTM was published to explain the differences between the current and new ETs once they arrive on board.

Work has started on redesigning the CPOET and WOET career courses. This is being carried out by a consortium made up of LEO Learning and WAVE Training Solution.

The redesign work is due to be completed and courses ready to start by the first quarter of 2016. The course redesign work will build upon the feedback received from schools and individuals last year and learning from the current training design of the ET, LET and POET career courses.

After considerable debate and deliberation the new branch badges have been approved and production started. The

NEED to get your message across?

To feature in the Navy News Two-Six pages contact Navy Command Media – Internal Comms Staff Officer:

Lt Cdr Emma McCormick, 93832 8809, email (Dii) NAVY MEDIACOMMS-IC-TL (External)

NAVY MEDIACOMMS-IC-TL@mod.uk

And don't forget: if you've not seen the latest edition of Two-Six on DVD, you can catch up with the last two years' worth on our YouTube channel – just search for TwoSixTV.

first new badges have been received and were worn by the ET(MEs) passing out of HMS Sultan on January 23. A plan is being developed to ensure timely distribution to the remaining EGS cadres.

The second Interim Fast Track selection board was convened, the standards and number of applicants was again high. Those individuals selected will be contacted by the FT career manager (CPO Bolton) over the next month to discuss career course start dates.

As part of the development of the remaining Professional Examinations (PEs) for the EGS cadres a consultation and review of the CPO to WO PE took place during Jan and Feb. This involved Flotilla Staff and was aimed at identifying any improvements that could be made to the CPO to WO PE prior to re-issue. The remaining PEs are scheduled to be issued during April.

If you have any questions or comments on Programme FARADAY then please contact me, WO1 Sharky Ward on 93832 7441 or via e-mail navy_eng_spt-hum_cap_wo1a. The Programme Faraday Intranet site can be found via the A-Z.

£70k pumped into refurbished shop

DEVONPORT Naval Base's shop has been given a £70K new look – its first in seven years.

The store in Drake is now a combined Costcutter shop with Costa coffee café.

Changes still to be made to the store in the HMS Drake Village complex include replacing the furniture and installing a cash machine.

Some of the profit from sales will go to the Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity.



• Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral David Steel tells delegates at a reception in Whitehall about the equality progress made by the RN

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen Cooban, DDC

Don't miss the boat to vote

THE General Election is rapidly approaching (Thursday May 7 for the record) and if you want to have your say, you'll need to make sure that you're on the electoral register.

Registering to vote is quicker and easier than ever before with a new system of online registration.

RN personnel and their families based in the UK and unlikely to change address or be posted overseas in the next year can register to vote online as ordinary electors by visiting www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

They can also register as 'Service Voters' – that allows you to be registered for five years at a fixed address in England, Scotland or Wales, even if you move around. This is particularly handy if personnel are already based overseas or think that they may be posted abroad in the next year. Service personnel can register online as a 'Service Voter' at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote/army-forces.

There are three options for casting your vote in May:

■ by post – if you want your ballot paper sent to you, then you need to consider whether there is enough time to receive your postal vote, complete and return it so that it arrives by 10pm on polling day. Postal votes that arrive after this time will not be counted.

■ by proxy – ask someone you know and trust to vote on your behalf. The proxy can either vote for you at their polling station or by post.

■ in person – if you are able to go to the polling station where you are registered to vote on polling day.

Throughout February and March, Unit Registration Officers will be holding a 'registration day'. They'll have paper registration forms if Service personnel prefer to complete those rather than registering online, as well as application forms to vote by post or by proxy. You'll need to post these forms to the Electoral Registration Officer at your local authority.

Moving on up

"AND at 56 it's the highest ever placing for Royal Navy with Workplace Equality Index..."

Which will mean nothing to readers who didn't listen to the charts on Radio 1 in the 70s or 80s.

But it does mean a lot to the RN, ranked the 56th best organisation in the land by campaigning civil rights group Stonewall, which looks at employers big and small across the UK and assesses them on how they tackle discrimination and create a workplace where lesbian, gay and bisexual staff feel valued and supported.

The Navy has twice been ranked 67 in the 15 years since the ban on homosexuality was lifted in the Forces – but never any higher, until 2015; the Army were placed 46th, the RAF 91st.

To celebrate the achievement – and progress made by all three Forces since 2000, a reception was held in Whitehall.

"I am thrilled with this result, the highest place ever achieved by the Royal Navy in the Stonewall index," said Cdr Chris New, head of the RN's Diversity and Inclusion team.

"It shows that – working with our partner organisations – the Navy has changed its culture to become a good employer, not just for LGB personnel, but for applicants from all sections of British culture."

The Stonewall index explores ten areas

of employment policy and practice towards employees: training, career development, monitoring and community engagement, and takes evidence from employees to compile the results.

Education Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities Nicky Morgan and Stonewall's chief executive both attended the event in the MOD's main building, where, in addition to some of the changes made over the past 15 years, they also heard accounts from Servicemen and women from all three Armed Forces on their experiences before and after the ban.

Until 1994 homosexuality in the military was a criminal offence – but after a legal challenge it was decriminalised, although policy continued to dictate that homosexuality was incompatible with Service life and gay personnel were still discharged.

The ban was finally lifted in 2000 by then Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon after four former Service personnel who'd been discharged on the grounds of their sexuality took their case to the European Court of Human Rights, causing an urgent review of policy.

Since then the Royal Navy has hosted the first LGBT conference, marched in uniform in London Pride and has become one of Stonewall's Diversity Champions – all closely followed by the Army and RAF.

Personnel organisers

Drafty's corner



OPS SIGNALS.

Rest assured: we only move people at short notice if we have to.

Ultimately we are maintaining operational capability at the front line which is of course, the RN's highest priority.

The direction and guidance for writing Personnel OPDEFs and PERREQs has recently been revised and issued as RNTM 300/14 and will be incorporated in BR3 in due course.

All heads of department, EWOs DEPCOs, coxswains and their peers in other units should be totally familiar with the contents of RNTM 300/14.

PERSONNEL OPERATIONS FORWARD (PERS OPS FORWARD)

Historically, each Waterfront Career Management Cell (CMC)

has managed these unplanned people movements using career managers, but as the frequency, number and complexity of personnel OPDEFs and PERREQs has risen, this has placed an increased burden on staff and distracted them from their primary role as career managers of junior rates.

Pers Ops Forward is therefore embedded in the waterfront alongside the force generating authorities. The aim is to assess the need and urgency of the requirement before coordinating the trawls and nominations at the waterfront coface.

The Pers Ops Forward cells are to be complemented with a lead Officer (SO2 or WO1) and two CPOs – one for augmentation management and one for OPDEF/PERREQ management. They will be assisted by a leading hand for data management.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Short-notice movements of personnel will have an impact, whether that be personal or professional, but these can also be seen as opportunities.

Often the optimal solution is found onboard, with increased responsibility and advancement being passed directly to a deputy or subordinate which can also cascade down the chain.

This gives an excellent opportunity for personal development – a chance to progress/complete task books and demonstrate suitability and

'merit' for selective advancement or promotion.

Units, employers and organisations can also benefit from releasing individuals to provide temporary cover – temporary loan can often be an investment, building experience levels and preparation for planned deployments or by refreshing operational currency and best practice.

In the first case, when making a short notice Personnel move, Pers Ops will always look for volunteers.

GENERAL SERVICE UPDATE

Over the past 12 months the RN has seen a sharp increase in the number of personnel OPDEFs, especially in the engineering cadres.

This can partly be attributed to the widely-reported lack of engineers in the whole of the UK, which has also affected the RN.

So to mitigate as far as possible the turbulent effect to our people our first response is "can you take the risk and sustain the gap?"

Even if the response is no, the justification is closely examined.

We understand that moving people at short notice is one of the main contributing factors to voluntary outflow, and decisions to do so are carefully considered on a case by case basis.

Until we can build resilience in the taut cadres, we may have to identify personnel as temporary cover for units deployed and in UK waters – often at short notice.

When this occurs we ensure

that the 'personal turbulence' is recorded and tracked by individual so that these demands are not lost.

SUBMARINE UPDATE

Over the past 12 months the Submarine Service has fallen more in line with the General Service in reporting manpower shortages.

Personnel OPDEFs and PERREQs are now being recorded across all submarine crews and platforms.

The number of submarine personnel OPDEFs has increased as we track and report more accurately the manning situation across the entire Silent Service.

It is encouraging to see that submarines are, for the most part, maintaining 100 per cent manning.

There will however continue to be critical pinch points, especially with the differing system competencies in the transition to the A-boats, within the WAR SSM, WESM TWS and SWS senior rate cadres and some MESM senior ratings.

ESTABLISHMENTS

The post of Pers Ops establishments has recently been stood up with the intention of providing a level of oversight of establishment personnel OPDEFs and their effect on operational capability, in particular training establishments.

A period of consultation/

engagement is currently taking place as we look to understand what may be required in the future to effectively manage and prioritise personnel ashore, whether that be in RN, joint or other defence areas.

MARITIME OPERATIONS CENTRE, NORTHWOOD

To ensure personnel factors are fully understood in both the Navy Ops and Commitments areas, Pers Ops retains a WO1 as the personnel liaison officer based at the Maritime Operations Centre.

Their primary role is to represent personnel impact, ideally with supporting evidence (eg from JPA), to demonstrate the likely impact on our people.

In the words of CNPERS, the role is to act as the N1 (Personnel) conscience for those planning and overseeing operations.

That way, appropriate weight is given to decisions which may impact on our people (and their families) who are required to deliver these operations.

This includes analysis of individuals' Separated Service levels, compliance with 2SL's Personnel Functional Standards, outstanding leave burden, platform harmony levels and planned joiners/leavers. It is therefore essential that individuals and units keep both 'personal' and 'personnel' information up to date in JPA. Only with this data can the potential impact on our people – the pros and cons – be accurate and fully understood at the planning stage.



Bideford attend Irish ceremony

BIDEFORD and District Sea Cadets were invited to the float-out of LÉ James Joyce, the second Irish offshore patrol vessel of the Samuel Beckett class to be constructed at Babcock's Appledore Shipyard in North Devon (pictured above).

Cadets and officers of the unit provided a guard of honour to the Admiral and Officers of the Irish Naval Service, watched by local dignitaries and invited public.

The cadets then took part in the ceremony before watching the impressive float-out of the vessel.

The milestone event took place almost a year after the 90m

vessel's keel was laid, and with the ship more than 90 per cent complete.

LÉ James Joyce will join the now-operational LÉ Samuel Becket, which was built, tested and delivered by Babcock to the Irish Naval Service last year.

The 2,256-tonne vessels, with a crew of 44, will undertake a range of duties such as fishery protection, search and rescue, anti-pollution and maritime security duties, including vessel boardings, much of it in the North Atlantic.

Work is under way at the yard on a third Irish OPV, with delivery due in mid-2016.

Supermarket deal is hailed

CUSTOMERS at a Sainsbury's superstore in Bucks were asked to nominate their favourite local registered charity to support – and when the results were in, the shop announced that Marlow Sea Cadets had been chosen.

Store manager Matt McBride said: "We are delighted to have chosen the Marlow Sea Cadets as this year's Local Charity Partner."

"After careful review, Marlow Sea Cadet unit was selected due to its outstanding work with youth in our community."

"Sainsbury's Marlow is committed to supporting the Marlow unit through fundraising and volunteering through to June."

Over the past five years, Sainsbury's stores in the UK have partnered with local charities,

raising more than £6 million.

Bob Savidge, unit treasurer and trustee, said staff and cadets were proud that they have Sainsbury's backing.

He said: "Marlow Sea Cadets has been valuable to our community for a great many years and it is terrific to receive acknowledgement from Sainsbury's."

"We look forward to working in partnership with the store to raise awareness and collect donations."

Donations are being collected at each checkout in the store, and cadets will also be on hand to help bag groceries and collect donations.

More activities are being planned, including taking part in special events.

Final touches to poppy installation

SEA Cadets from across Tyneside travelled to London on Remembrance weekend where they made up the final group of volunteers to install poppies in the moat of the Tower

True colours

ROYAL Navy patrol ship HMS Mersey spent three weeks alongside in Falmouth for a period of maintenance, giving her Young Officers the chance to reach out to the community.

One of the beneficiaries was Falmouth and Penryn unit, where the sailors redecorated the Seamanship classroom.

The Young Officers are assigned to Mersey primarily to gain experience on the bridge in preparation for becoming fully-trained RN watchkeepers.

While alongside there was limited scope to conduct this training, but it represented an opportunity of a different nature.

Falmouth and Penryn unit is the largest in Cornwall, in both resources and number of cadets, but still relies on volunteers.

Brut force required as new flagship launched



● The bottle of Spanish Cava



● Clouds give way to blue skies as the Sea Cadets' new flagship

FLAGSHIP FACTS

Load line length	23.96m
Beam	7.51m
Overall length	31.9m
Draft	3.2m
Sail area	560m ²
Cadets	24
Staff	8
Trainee berths	2
Day guests	12

them.

"Today is a momentous occasion as we witness the launch of the new flagship. This new ship will continue to carry on the legacy that TS Royalist has left behind, thousands more cadets having the opportunity to travel on board her, continuing to get vital experience in offshore sailing, seamanship and other qualifications."

"I know TS Royalist will be greatly missed by all who sailed in her and the Sea Cadet Corps in general but I also know this new flagship will be loved and held dear to us just as TS Royalist was."

The Spanish and British national anthems were then played through loudspeakers on the quayside to signal the start of the launch.

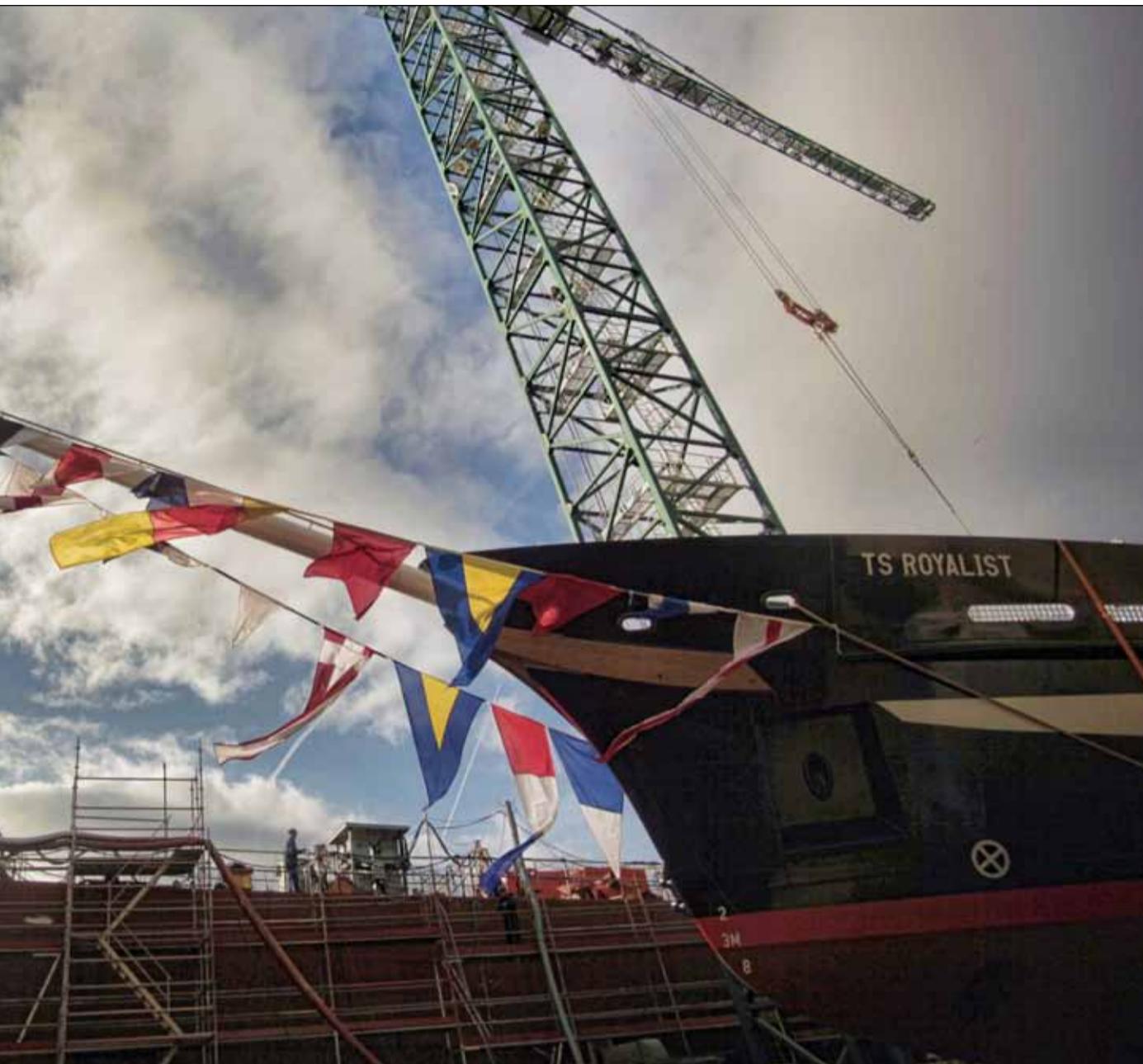
Capt Palmer added: "This is something very special and very wonderful because it's dealing with young people and that is why we are involved with the Sea Cadets."

"We believe the experience they gain on this does give them



● Looking down on the new flagship at the Astilleros Gondán Shipyard; The dozen cadets practise launching their new square rigger





sits in the shadow of a Norwegian North Sea supply vessel under construction at Astilleros Gondán



● Capt Nigel Palmer and Lt Angie Morris view the flagship

a head start in life that perhaps otherwise they would never get."

Capt Jonathan Holloway, Captain Sea Cadets, said: "This is a monumental occasion for us and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Sea Cadets to see first-hand and experience the launch of their brand new ship.

"We look forward to the commissioning of the new ship when Sea Cadets will finally have the chance to sail the new ship on an offshore voyage."

Cadet Rosie Clark, 17, from Barnsley, said: "It's a beautiful day for a ship launch. I was here for the keel laying and it was rainy and miserable.

"It's a great honour and privilege to see this amazing ship. I watched the old one go out and the new one come in.

"It's quite emotional as well. When she hit the water I felt a mixture of shock and amazement."

Fellow cadet Robyn Knowles said: "I love it. It was brilliant when she hit the water."

Following the launch, the vessel – which was decked out with the Union Flag, the Spanish flag and the flag of the region of Asturias – was towed back into the yard and moored to enable the cadets to step aboard.

There is much work still to do, including installing the mast, but the cadets were able to see for themselves how much room the new ship offers.

The vessel, designed by Acubens, also offers better all-round sailing ability and performance.

Much to the delight of the cadets, the ship will also have proper beds.

She will also be faster, easier to run and more economical than her predecessor.

The launch day ended with a gala dinner in the town of Ribadeo, where commemorative gifts were exchanged.

The flagship's captain Lt Angie Morris received a new logbook for the vessel – and MSCC chief executive Martin Coles was presented with the neck of the bottle of Cava, complete with a ribbon in the colours of the Spanish flag.

The MSCC handed over a print to the yard depicting the 54 Sea Cadets' 'Commonwealth boats' taking part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee pageant on the Thames in 2012.

The cadets who attended the launch are: Georgina Thornton-Barter, Rosie Clark, Chris Davies, Craig Symmons, Fiona Tait, Simon Hodgetts, Samuel Hall, Harry Rose, Charlie Abbot, Jade Coughlin, Jessica Edwards and Robyn Knowles. Their

Pictures: Martin J Coles and Ben Thornley
names have been recorded in the hope they will be able to attend the decommissioning of the new ship in 40-plus years' time.

The flagship will take up to 900 cadets a year on offshore voyages during her expected 40-year career.

Detailed finishing work on the new vessel is now coming to an end with the finalisation of the interior fit-out. Although built in Spain, several of the ship's parts were made in the UK.

A crew will travel back to Spain to work the ship up before bringing her to Portsmouth Harbour where she will be officially named and commissioned in May.

The MSCC is now focusing on launching a Flagship Bursary Appeal aimed at helping more young people get on board.

The Sea Cadet Corps aims to raise £500,000 over the next five years, and have already received support from the Michael Uren Foundation, a supporter of good causes including medical research, education, the Armed Forces and wildlife conservation.



Theme for mess dinner

RHYL Sea Cadets held a mess dinner at the Fenol Fawr hotel in Bodelwyddan, with Cdr (SCC) Janet Evans RNR as guest of honour (pictured above).

The event was arranged by the Cadet Mess President, POC CJ McDermott, assisted by the senior cadets at the unit, taking the theme of World Wars 1 and 2.

Cdr Evans said it was the first mess dinner organised by cadets that she had attended, and that she'd had a very enjoyable evening.

After the meal a raffle and games took place and cash raised will be used for the benefit of the cadets.

CCF to study RN war role

MORE than 50 Combined Cadet Force officers and area instructors recently met to launch a four-year programme to give Combined Cadet Force Naval Section cadets an understanding of the role of the Naval Service in World War 1.

The two-day INSET – dubbed Op Retrospect – was led by Cdr (CCF) Alan Mackie, who is leading the steering group which was set up to deliver the initiative.

An overview of World War 1 was provided by steering group member Lt (CCF) Michael Barracough, and a targeted review of the RNAS was given by another member, Lt Cdr Peter Finan.

The keynote address was given by Mike Farquharson-Roberts, the author of *A History of the Royal Navy during World War One*.

The retired Surgeon Admiral gave a lively and informative account of the role of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines during the war, drawing attention to both the successes and failures encountered both before, during and after the conflict.

This was followed by visits to the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, the Royal Marines Museum and a tour of M33, a monitor currently undergoing a major refit.

These visits were designed to show how the museums could help cadets to gain a greater understanding and knowledge of the role of the Navy.

To put the scale of the naval

Medal for padre

A SPECIAL evening was organised at New Romney and District unit to present Revd Jim Field with the Sea Cadet Long Service Medal and Certificate to mark his service to units in Kent.

The presentation was made by unit chairman Lt Cdr (SCC) Don Davies RNR.

Revd Field was Vicar of St Nicholas and Benefice and New Romney unit padre until his retirement last April.

The chairman thanked Jim and Lily for making the journey from their home in Littlehampton.

Reunion for Jack

A STALWART supporter of TS Alacrity Junior Cadet Corps is to be honoured at a reunion in Denmead, north of Portsmouth.

Jack Hotchin has devoted 50 years to cadets, 21 with TS Alacrity, an independent naval cadet unit.

The reunion/awards night will be at Denmead War Memorial Hall at 7pm on March 7, and any former cadets who remember 'Uncle Jack' are invited – bring any memorabilia along as well.

contribution into context the group assembled at the Portsmouth Naval Memorial on Southsea Common after the museum visits.

The day ended with dinner at Hornet Sailing Club in Gosport.

The INSET was concluded by Cdr Mackie launching the four-year programme for cadets.

In so doing he said that the aim was "to bring to the Cadets, particularly of the RN and RM CCF, an awareness of the role of the Royal Navy in helping to shape what we understand as the First World War and also to look at what we as a nation and as the nation's Navy learned from its lessons."

The proposal is for a programme of standalone activities, repeated each year but which collectively will build into a body of knowledge which may be of use to future students and to schools.

It will consist of a Cadet Challenge, a Cadet Course and a Local Focus.

At the heart of the plan would be the Cadet Course which would involve research activities for the cadets using the resources of the museums and which would include a planned visit to France and Belgium to follow in the footsteps of the Royal Naval Division on the Western Front.

The Cadet Challenge will run in 2015 and 2016, with cadets invited to research any aspect of the role of the sea in World War 1.

Finally the Local Focus will be held in 2017 and 2018, with cadets encouraged to research areas of note relevant to their locality – the years 1917 and 1918 were chosen as this was the period when the worst effects of the war were felt at home.



SUPPORT YOUR SEA CADETS

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Visit sea-cadets.org or call 020 7654 7000



● Delight as the cadets watch the vessel make its way down the slipway and on to the Ria de Ribadeo in Asturias, northern Spain

Picture tells a story

WARSASH unit was the scene of a special 'show and tell' session.

A unique piece of British maritime history surfaced at the unit whilst being transferred from survey ship HMS Scott to patrol ship HMS Protector.

At first glance it might seem strange that a picture of St Paul's Cathedral viewed from the River Thames, engraved in 1886, could be linked to Britain's rich maritime heritage.

But on realising its significance, Scott's Gunnery Officer – who is also one of Warsash's Civilian Instructors, and was charged with its safe transfer – took time out from the journey to share the picture's remarkable history.

This picture was the personal property of polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

It was taken by him on Captain Scott's first expedition to Antarctica on the Terra Nova in 1901-03, and returned to Antarctica on board Sir Ernest Shackleton's Nimrod in 1907-09, when he got to within 100 miles of the South Pole.

It returned to Antarctica a third time, departing Plymouth Sound in August 1914 on board Endurance for the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, aiming to be the first to cross the entire continent.

The expedition failed as Endurance became trapped in the ice and was eventually crushed – and so began one of the greatest feats of survival and leadership in modern times.

Using wood salvaged from Endurance they fitted skis to the three boats, and dragged them across the ice to the sea.

They launched the boats and sailed through mountainous seas to Elephant Island, which wasn't near any shipping routes, so Shackleton took the strongest of the three boats, the James Caird, modifying it for the Southern Ocean using materials to hand including seal blood, and taking a hand-picked crew he sailed to the uninhabited west of South Georgia, a 15-day voyage.

Rather than risking further time at sea, Shackleton decided to complete the journey over the mountain range and glaciers to Stromness.

Shackleton rescued the picture from Endurance before their escape, and it accompanied him on his final voyage to Antarctica on board Quest in 1922, during which he died and was buried in South Georgia.

The picture was returned to the Shackleton family, who gave it to the British Trans-Arctic expedition in 1968; crossing from Alaska to Norway via the North Pole, after which it was presented to Antarctic Patrol Ship HMS Endurance.

Awards night

RUSHDEN unit held their Award Night to reward cadets for all their hard work last year.

The unit is proud to be involved with activities in Rushden, and its members have a sense of pride in wearing the dark blue uniform.

The guest list included the Mayor of Rushden, Cllr Richard Lewis, and Cllr George Whiting, the Mayor of Higham Ferrers.

The unit was established in its own right early last year, and has gone from strength to strength under its new CO, PO (SCC) Telford RNR, and her staff, with the help of parents and the Management Committee.

The unit has links to HMS Diamond, the new class 45 destroyer, and strong links are being forged for the future – including hopefully a tour of the destroyer when refurbished.



● Hong Kong Sea Cadets held their annual parade late last year at the Police College. On parade were 400 cadets and the HK Police Band, while the inspecting officer was Mr Lai Tung-Kwok, Secretary for Security for the Hong Kong Special Administrative region. The Sea Cadets were incorporated in the former British colony in 1968 by RNVR officers, and the Corps now has a strength of some 1,400 members across the territories



Success at the double

Top performers are recognised by Corps

THE results are in, the plaudits have been received – the Corps has published its full list of winners and contenders.

Top of the pile is Peterhead unit, of Northern Area, which took the Canada Trophy, the prize for the unit which is considered to have attained the very highest standard of all-round efficiency.

The Scottish unit – one of the most northerly in the Corps – last won the trophy in 2008.

Runner-up to Peterhead – and therefore winner of the Thomas Gray Memorial Trophy, is Beccles unit from the Eastern Area.

The Captain's Cup is awarded to the unit which has not won either of the above two awards, but has nevertheless made a particular impression on the Captain Sea Cadets.

The recipient of the cup on this occasion is Evesham unit, from the South-West.

All three of the units mentioned above also won Stephenson

Gibraltar Cup contenders

THE Gibraltar Cup is the prize for the top Royal Marines Cadet Detachment in the Sea Cadets Corps.

Every year the best detachment in each of the six areas – judged to have attained the highest standard of all-round merit – go forward to a final showdown in field competition format to decide the *crème de la crème*.

And the six RMCD contenders for the 2015 Gibraltar Cup are: Welwyn Garden and Hatfield (East), Kingston and District (London), Queenferry (North), Stockport (North-West), Ashford (South), Truro (South-West).

Trophies, which are awarded to the top unit in each Area and allow them to be assessed for the Canada Cup and Thomas Gray Memorial Trophy.

The other three area winners were Kingston and District (London), City of Liverpool (North-West) and Hastings (South).

Next on the list is the McBeath Trophy, awarded annually to a unit which has put up a particularly meritorious performance during the year and is worthy of special recognition

– the unit in 2014 being Great Yarmouth (East).

The prize for the most community-minded unit is the Colditz Award, a framed certificate, a photo of Colditz Castle and a sum of money donated by the Colditz Association of former prisoners-of-war.

The latest winner is Farnham unit, who can spend their prize on a project that will further Sea Cadet training.

Windsor and Eton's Royal Marines Cadet detachment showed the greatest improvement over the course of 2014, thereby bagging the SRMO's Trophy for the Southern unit.

The Commander Brown Award is awarded annually to the Sea or Royal Marines Cadet who has been active in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, has shown leadership and is keen to make a career at sea – this year the award winner is POC Stephen, of Southern Area.

A separate award – the Leadership Trophy – is given to the Leading Cadet or Petty Officer Cadet who has shown the best sustained leadership qualities during the previous year, and this trophy was awarded to POC Thomas, of Fishguard unit in the South-West.

The Roddie Casement Sword for the unit CO or OiC who has contributed most to the aims of the Corps went to Sub Lt (SCC) Carl Leaver RNR, of Kingston and District in

Six of the best

THE Navy Board authorises the appointment of one Navy Board cadet for each Area of the Corps with the aim of "raising the profile of the SCC through exposure to a top-quality cadet to professional bodies and social contacts that deal with Navy Board members and other high-ranking Royal Navy officers."

The six role models for 2015 are:

- POC Kieran (Loughborough) – Eastern
- LC Nikolas (Hornchurch and Upminster) – London
- POC Daniel (Dundonald) – Northern
- LC Shannon (St Helens) – North-West
- POC Charlie (Ramsgate and Broadstairs) – Southern
- POC Ashley (Sutton Coldfield) – South-West

London, while the McCarroll Trophy for outstanding personal achievement by a RM cadet Officer or instructor was given to Capt (SCC) Jim Juniper RMR, of Eastbourne RMCD in Southern Area.

The Indefatigable 1906 Shield for the Royal Marines Cadet gaining most boatwork points over the course of a year went to MC2 George, of Chelmsford (London), while the TS Indefatigable Cup, another trophy recognising significant improvement, went to Southern Area unit Westerham.

The Cornwell Medal, for the cadet who achieves the highest exam marks on completion of the POC Advancement course at SCTC HMS Raleigh, was won by POC Oliver, of Bridgwater (South-West) and POC Molly, of Milton Keynes (South), while the Pollock Memorial Prize for the best-performing candidate on the LC Advancement course went to POC Thomas, of Fishguard (South-West).

St Helens in the North-West picked up the Vernon Award for the unit making most meritorious progress in marine engineering, while Barrow-in-Furness (North) and Ashington (North) shared the honours for the Cleverly Award, for the unit with the best Junior section.

The best-performing district in terms of an average of unit review scores was Grampian (North), which took the Navy League District Trophy.

A/Sub Lt (SCC) N Davis RNR, of Scarborough unit in Eastern Area, secured the OSB Trophy by achieving the highest marks on the national Officers' Selection Board, and the Halliday Trophy for the RM Cadet with the best result in the RMC Corporal to Sergeant exam was won by Cdt Sgt Francis, of Bristol Adventure RMCD (South-West).

Other award winners include: Amaryllis Trophy: Bangor/Portrush/Dundonald (North)

Northern Ireland Trophy: Dundonald (North).

Ledger Trophy: Hinckley (East), Brentwood (London), Dundonald (Northern), St Helens (North-West), Guildford (South), Hereford (South-West).

Captain's Certificate of Commendation: Keighley and Leicester North (both East), Brentwood (London), Sefton, Tameside, Barrow-in-Furness, City of Liverpool and Chorley (all North-West), Newburn, Gateshead and Redcar (North), Westerham, Ramsgate and Broadstairs and Staines and Egham (all South), Barnstaple and Barry (both South-West).

Alexander joined at the age of 14, and said: "I was already an avid sailor and wanted to improve my skills, which gaining this qualification has enabled me to do.

"I have many more water qualifications including power boat displacement and planning and my coxswain badge.

"I also joined Sea Cadets because I love music. I started playing music when I was about eight years old and although I don't play my favourite instrument, the clarinet, in the band I have had the opportunity to learn others."

TV feature

MEMBERS of Reigate unit took a particular interest in the televised Remembrance Days ceremonies last November – because a former cadet from the unit sounded the *Last Post* at a number of high-profile events.

Tom Cartright was a member of the unit band, and went on to join the Royal Marines Band Service.

He played at the Imperial War Museum for a BBC programme, then again at the Royal Albert Hall on the Saturday night, then again with the Royal Marine buglers on the Sunday at the Cenotaph in London.



STONEHAVEN cadets and staff celebrated 60 years since the unit was commissioned at the annual Cadet Mess Dinner, held at their headquarters on the High Street.

This event is held every year and sees adult volunteers, parents and supporters provide a meal for the cadets – following Royal Naval custom and tradition – as a thank you for their efforts over the preceding year.

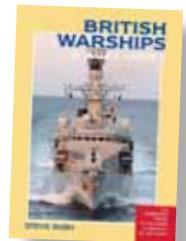
The guest of honour for 2014 was unit president Dr Andrew Orr, who is Vice Lord Lieutenant for Kincardineshire.

Dr Orr gave a speech regarding his membership

of the Royal Company of Archers, who are the Queen's bodyguards whenever she visits Scotland, and also spoke about his ancestor Lt (eventually Admiral) John Bythesea, who was awarded the Victoria Cross during the Crimean campaign in 1854.

As part of the proceedings Dr Orr cut a commemorative cake to mark the 60th anniversary of the Sea Cadets in Stonehaven, the unit having been commissioned in 1954.

With Dr Orr in the picture (left) are cadets Shannon Maitland (Vice-Mess President), Markus Coolahan (Mess President) and Calum Miller (acting Chaplain).



How we won WW1 (Pt 1)

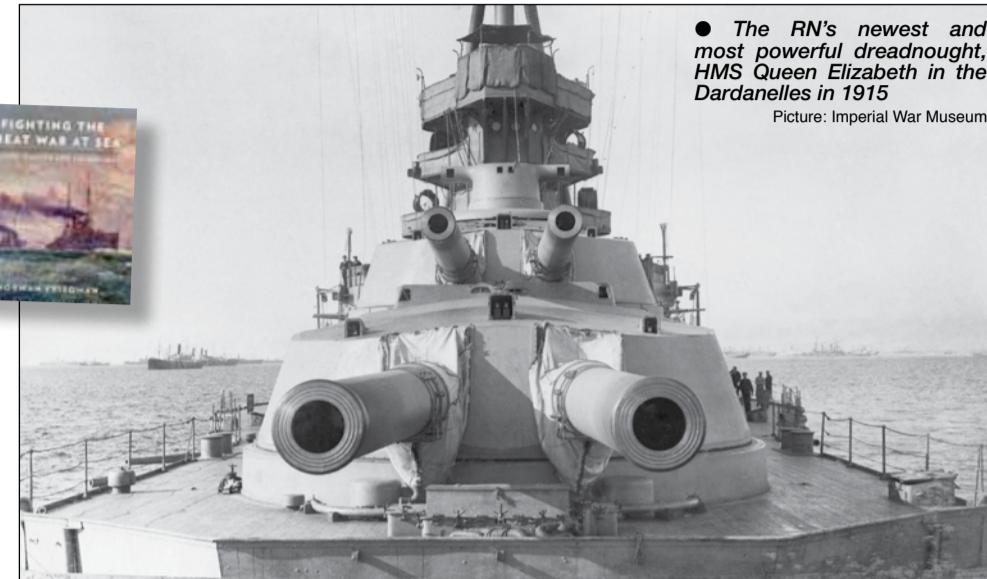
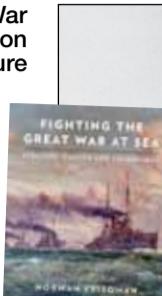
THE centenary of World War 1 has seen much attention and a mass of new literature devoted to the subject.

Much of this has concentrated on the war on land – and the Western Front in particular – which is understandable given that this was the only time the armies of the British Empire were the main forces in the field against the most powerful army in Europe, writes Prof Eric Grove of Liverpool Hope University.

Yet, as the Admiralty took pains to point out at the time – and as the First Sea Lord repeats in his foreword to Dr Norman Friedman's new book *Fighting the Great War At Sea* (Seaford, £45 ISBN 978-1-84832-189-2) – there would have been no Western Front without the command of the world's oceans exercised by the British Empire, its allies and associates. As the author correctly points out the British Empire was a global superpower, knit together by sea communications whose security rested on naval power.

This new book is a typical work of Friedman, based on massive research in original sources and a deep understanding of the relationship of technology to tactics and strategy. It has 16 chapters beginning with a strategic review of a 'maritime war' and going on to resources, blockade and economic warfare, pre-war expectations versus reality, the fleets, the geography of the naval war, fleet tactics, capital ships, littoral operations, the battle in the narrow seas, submarines, trade protection, anti-submarine warfare (both tactics and technology and assets), mine warfare and 'lessons for the future'.

It is a typical product of Seaford of Barnsley, lavishly illustrated with excellent and well-produced photographs, some well known but others less so. All however are complemented by



● The RN's newest and most powerful dreadnought, HMS Queen Elizabeth in the Dardanelles in 1915

Picture: Imperial War Museum

THE GROVE REVIEW

extensive, excellent, informative and well-informed captions.

Given the book's great strengths it seems a pity therefore that the reviewer must point out some significant weaknesses. The first is the use of secondary sources. Those in the bibliography are far from comprehensive and look as if they have been selectively chosen to support the author's ideas rather than challenge them. The crucial work of Professor Clark on the origins of the war is ignored as is the literature produced by what might be called the 'Kings College London School of Naval History'.

I know only too well that Dr Friedman does not agree with the latter, that is basically a critique of what might be called the American school of which Norman is a part, but it will not do just to ignore it.

The author is admirably prolific and an example to us all in hard work and productivity,

but there is a price that is being paid. The mass of material is often presented in an undigested way and chapters tend to tail off without proper conclusions. The result is like a dish made of wonderful ingredients but insufficiently cooked.

Sometimes the reader gets lost in detail that is always of interest, but perhaps better contained in an appendix. A good example is the detailed section on German capital ship plans, the main lesson of which seems to be that the Kaiser was being humoured with unrealistic projects while the war was being lost.

There are important gaps also. There is little or nothing on the war in the Adriatic, a word that does not even appear in the index! The description of the actions of the High Sea Fleet is an admirable and very useful digest of the German official history, making the useful – and often forgotten – point that Jutland was

far from the end of the Fleet's activities, but this is insufficiently integrated with other accounts from the British side.

The discussion of the reasons for the disastrous British battle-cruiser explosions is quite correct and rightly critical of the subsequent attempts to cover up the bad ammunition-handling arrangements responsible for the disasters. The case would have been even better made if the role of WO Grant in virtually single-handedly altering HMS Lion's handling arrangements, which saved the ship from going the same way as the others was at least mentioned.

The account of the neutralisation of the German U-boat threat also would have benefited from use of at least two more sources. One is Admiral Hezlett's *Submarine and Sea Power*, which pointed out clearly that the main reason the initial 1917 U-boat offensive was blunted, was improved shipping management and concentration on the North Atlantic run. An

even more essential source notable by its absence is Margaret Barnett's *British Food Policy in the First World War* with its counter-intuitive analysis that the quarter of 1917 which saw shipping losses come to an apparently unsustainable monthly figure, was also a peak period for imports of flour and grain. This was a decisive demonstration of the futility of the German strategy of the unrestricted U-boat *guerre de course* given the extent of allied shipping resources when efficiently managed. By helping bring Washington into the war, that both tightened the blockade and mobilised the USA's overall potential, made it even more strategically futile.

The author is clearly not very pro-German and this colours his account to perhaps too great an extent. The Second Reich was not the centralised, Army-dominated state the author describes; the situation was much more complex.

The lack of governmental control was an important reason why German attempts to organise their food supplies were such an abject failure and why both the black market and desertion were such problems. The strange assertion that the Germans shot more men for disciplinary offences than the British needs some justification. As far as I know it is just plain wrong, a very rare factual error for this author.

All this being said however, the overall quality of the book and its contents make it required reading for anyone interested in the maritime warfare of the 20th Century. As Admiral Zambellas puts it: "As well as providing a compelling and convincing historical analysis of World War 1 at sea, the book has contemporary relevance too."

"That is as it should be because the United Kingdom, and indeed the world beyond, remains as dependent on the sea today as 100 years ago."

IT'S a new year and that must mean a fresh edition of *British Warships and Auxiliaries*, the very handy annual pocket-book guide to the RN, RFA, aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm, weapons systems and supporting craft – all crammed into 120 pages.

It's a constant bedfellow of the *Navy News* team for its ease of use and price (£8.99 ISBN 978-1-904459-613) compared with, say, the admittedly much more comprehensive *Jane's Fighting Ships*.

It's also invariably spot on with its 'state of the union' overview of the condition of the Senior Service.

And in 2015, author Steve Bush believes it's a glass half-full/half empty situation: there's the much heralded "maritime renaissance" surrounding HMS Queen Elizabeth, Astutes, Wildcats, Merlin 2s and 4s, Type 26s, new patrol vessels. That's the glass half-full.

And there's the glass half-empty: a general election, looming defence review "and with it will come more pain and more harsh decisions with regards to what to give up. Put in simple terms another budget-driven review will leave the RN unable to fulfil the demands placed upon it by government."

It is not merely the RN, or UK defence, facing stark financial decisions as Bush points out in the companion volume *US Navy Warships and Auxiliaries* (Maritime Books, £12.99 ISBN 978-1-904459-620) which is now in its third edition.

In design and aim it's identical to the British version, but as the world's largest navy, the US edition stretches to more than 220 pages.

As 2015 opens, America has just shy of 300 vessels, typically more than half of them at sea on any one day, with one in three warships and submarines deployed.

It's also going through a modernisation programme – new carriers, new attack submarines, new destroyers (trust Arleigh Burkes and the sci-fi-esque Zumwalt) littoral combat ships (which are a bit like Type 26s) and new assault ships *inter alia* – all at a time when Washington has slashed the US Navy's budget by \$14bn (about £9bn).

How we won WW1 (Pt 2)

THE reissue of the standard work on the RN in the Great War – Arthur Marder's *From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow* – has reached its conclusion with the publication of the final three volumes of the quintet.

First produced over the period of a decade half a century ago, Seaford has issued paperbacks of the seminal series, each with an introduction by Canadian naval historian Barry Gough.

We reviewed the first two volumes in our November 2013 edition. Completing the set are *Jutland and After* (III – ISBN 978-1-84832-200-4), 1917: *Year of Crisis* (IV – ISBN 978-1-84832-201-1) and *Victory and Aftermath* (V – ISBN 978-1-84832-2-35), each priced £16.99.

Of these, *Jutland and After* is the pivotal volume in Marder's history – and the one most likely to draw in the general reader.

The clash of dreadnoughts remains the greatest naval battle in European waters in the age of steel – and has been re-fought by naval officers and historians ever since; the Admiralty all but tore itself apart between the wars as its upper reaches of the RN split into Jellicoe and Beatty factions.

As an American, Marder was able to approach the subject without any such partisanship. To him, Jutland was a decisive victory – not in the Trafalgar sense, rather in convincing the Germans they could not,

and should not, challenge the supremacy of the Grand Fleet.

That it was never beaten in the field is the long shadow cast by the battle of May 31 1916.

Indeed, the Germans were quick to trumpet victory – and cover up losses. They made the loudest noise, first – and the world listened.

For the Admiralty, the clash of dreadnoughts was a brutal lesson in public relations.

By the time it awoke – too late – it issued one of the very worst communiqués in the history of public relations, admitting RN losses... and very much played down the enemy's (it took a *third* public statement before it decided Jutland had been a victory).

The result? In the popular conscience – and certainly in 1916 with a people weened on stories of Nelson and Trafalgar – Jutland has gone down as a British defeat.

Eighteen months later at Zeebrugge a raid which was by and large a failure, became a triumph courtesy of a bit of Admiralty flim-flam.

Perhaps the greatest lesson of Jutland is one the media and public still doesn't understand that naval victory isn't defined by numbers of ships, by losses, but by who commands the sea.

Had the Germans come out again – and their admirals certainly intended they would,

planning a death ride at the end of WW1 (rioting in the Fleet which led to the Kaiser's downfall prevented them) – Prof Marder reckoned "the outcome would never have been in doubt."

The post-Jutland volumes are devoted to the final two years of the war which, save for the U-boat campaign, were rather devoid of action – certainly big ship action. As a result they're probably less attractive to the general reader (but remain essential for the serious historian of the Great War).

There are wider lessons which, even with the passage of four decades (Marder's final volume was published in 1970), remain pertinent today, such as the never-ending struggle between politicians and military leaders, with the former almost always coming out on top (the rather shabby dismissal of Jellicoe in 1917 being a case in point).

Indeed, Jellicoe's fall is a mirror of many a modern-day political scandal – a trial by media with a succession of articles chipping away at the edifice of the Admiralty (sometimes with justification, but invariably not) before the political leaders determined: *enough is enough* and wielded the axe.

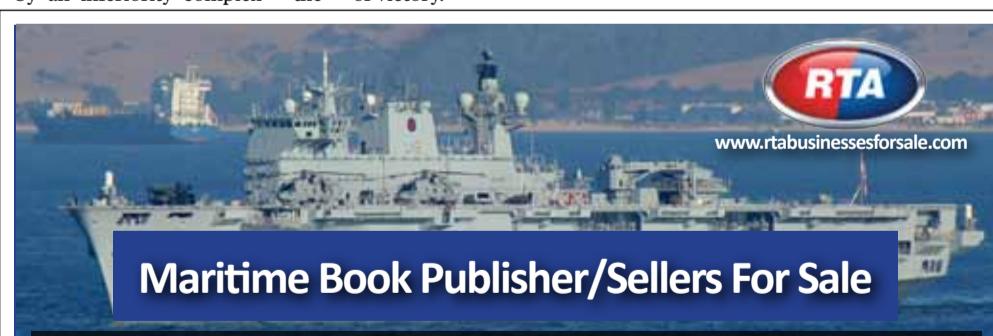
The completing tome in the quintet deals with the final months of the war and the demise of the German Fleet,

before Marder reviews the RN's performance in its first critical test of the 20th Century.

By and large, these 'Reflections on an era' stand firm in 2015: that the Royal Navy fundamentally contributed to victory by strangling German trade at sea (which really bit in 1917 and 1918); that however brave the *Matrose* was, the *metelot* was for the most part better trained, better led and enjoyed better conditions; that the Kaiser's Navy was burdened by an inferiority complex – the

RN possessed a self-confidence, a history of winning going back to the Armada, while the Germans were not a seafaring nation.

Above all, though challenged, though it suffered heavy losses and defeats, though it never achieved a 20th-Century Trafalgar, though its staff work was lacking and its upper echelons invariably had terrible relations with the politicians, the Royal Navy maintained command of the seas. And that, in naval warfare, is the definition of victory.



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Shorts

■ Two young officers from BRNC Dartmouth competed in the annual Admirals Cup held at the Indian Naval Academy in Ezhimala in South West India.

Mid Alisdair Sedgeworth and Mid Oliver Tooze-Hobson finished third among the 16 countries competing for the coveted Admirals Cup – a team sailing event in the Laser Radial Class.

In the Individual competition, Mid Sedgeworth finished in sixth position and Mid Tooze-Hobson was ninth.

■ The Royal Marines Sports Association held its annual dinner and awards ceremony at CTCRM.

More than 220 sportsmen and women attended to watch a number of awards handed out.

Sports administrator of the year was won by C/Sgt B Mardle, of the Royal Marines Rugby League. The Lifetime achievement award went to Cpl M Croasdale (Running/Winter Sports). Team of the year went to the Rifle Association.

The final sporting award, Sportsman of Year was presented to Sgt John Jackson, a member of the GB bobsleigh team at the Winter Olympics.

The event was also attended by Barry Fry, Director of Football at Peterborough Utd.

■ The Royal Navy Ice Hockey Association hosted the Army Ice Hockey Association at Gosport Ice Rink in order to raise as much money for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal as possible.

The British Army Blades demolished the Royal Navy Destroyers 9-0 in front of a crowd of more than 300 people.

■ In a fitting end to his Naval squash career, Cdr Martin Jukes guided his Naval Air Command team to their first Inter-Regional Squash Championship title this decade. The players from the Fleet Air Arm squeezed out a strong challenge from the Royal Marines.

Significant performances were put in by PO Loz Seaman and AET Conrad Young, who ended the competition unbeaten. Newcomer OC Dave McConnell from BRNC showed great promise in winning his match for the Western Region against the Royal Marines.

■ HMS Collingwood became the first ever Naval establishment to host and organise an Individual Armed Forces Throwdown Competition.

Across a whole day, 35 individuals took part in a series of challenging workouts centred on CrossFit; a new concept that combines elements of weights, cardio and gymnastics. CrossFit's model is based on ten recognised general physical skills including stamina, flexibility, power, agility and balance; its aim is to best prepare athletes/trainees for any physical contingency.

■ The Royal Navy Swimming and Water Polo Championships were held at HMS Heron.

A total of 31 personnel took part in the swimming event at RNAS Yeovilton. Key performances were from LH Liam Armstrong of HMS Seahawk winning the 200m Freestyle and 100m Freestyle, and Sub/Lt Hannah Litchfield of HMS Sultan winning the 200m Freestyle and 100m Butterfly. The swimming competition was followed by the final of the Water Polo Championship. The competition was contested between a combined team representing the Royal Marines and Commando Helicopter Force against the rest of the Navy team, who emerged 11-7 victors.

Duo fly flag for kayak

TWO former shipmates reunited to take part in an international kayaking marathon in France.

Lt Cdr Adam Egeland-Jensen and Cpl Paul Baker, who served together in HMS Fearless, stepped forward to enable the Royal Navy Kayaking Association to enter a K2 team into the 30th Marathon International des Gorges de l'Ardèche.

It is believed to be the first time that the Royal Navy has competed in the 32km race along the Ardèche River gorge from Vallon Pont d'Arc to St Martin de l'Ardèche – a route used by Emperor Charlemagne and many of the Templar Knight Crusaders to reach southern France.

Famed for being a centre to all forms of canoeing and kayaking, the Ardèche Marathon event, conceived by Claude Peschier, former French champion and 1969 World champion K1 slalom kayaker, attracts all comers, including many local villages and communities entering homebuilt C9 and K7 special craft.

But there is also major international interest in completing this descent race in marathon boats, and there are always 30 reserved places for invited International elite entries in the K2 class, with many hopeful contenders aiming to perform well.

With the river in a high state of flow, such that the event was almost called off the day before, the RNKA team settled for holding position into flow just upstream of the start and then working their way through the field.

In the end they finished in a time of 1hr 52mins, finishing 51st out of 95 all-male K2s. Overall they were 154th out of 487 boats.

Lt Cdr Egeland-Jensen, from the Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS Collingwood, and Cpl Baker of 43 Cdo, said it was an amazing event to be involved in and both hope to return.

Lt Cdr Egeland-Jensen believes it might be possible to run an adventure training activity in the week before the event for many different RNKA disciplines and then have a larger multi-discipline team take part.

The RNKA promotes all paddlesport but over recent years sea kayaking has become very popular.



● Lt Cdr Adam Egeland-Jensen, second right, with Cpl Paul Baker, right, and fellow competitors Shane Houghting and Emma Gillmer, of the British Canoe Union



● Negotiating white water at the bottom of Charlemagne during the international event in Ardèche

As well as promoting leadership, teamwork, nautical navigation, journey planning, weather and tidal knowledge, it is above all a fun way to keep fit.

The RNKA organises sea kayak taster sessions, training courses and expeditions. Annual events include Exercise Paddle Aphrodite in Cyprus and Exercise Solent Splash off the Isle of Wight.

Units and ships can organise their own expeditions and seek support from RNKA coaches.

Due to the warm sea and minimal tides in Cyprus, Exercise Paddle Aphrodite caters for all abilities from novice to aspirant sea kayak coach.

For those with some kayaking experience, Exercise Solent Splash provides an introduction to sea kayaking, BCU 3 Star and BCU 4 Star Leader training.

There is also an opportunity to get assessed in these awards or simply gain log book experience. Exercise Solent Splash 5 will run from June 16 to 19 this year.



● A camera on Lt Cdr Egeland-Jensen's kayak captures the action

Another recent expedition to the Quiberon Peninsula also included a circumnavigation of Belle Isle.

The 1664 Challenge was just one of many events in 2014 to celebrate the Royal Marines' 350th birthday.

It was a true demonstration of Commando Spirit, grit, determination and endurance; involving skiing, sailing, cycling, kayaking and running.

The kayak phase was planned and supported by members of

the RNKA, who also took part in other kayak events as part of their training schedule; this included the London Kayakathon.

There can be confusion about whether the sport is canoeing or kayaking.

The actual difference is to do with the type of paddle used rather than whether the boat is open (no cockpit) or closed (with a cockpit).

Kayaks are propelled with double bladed paddles, Canoes are propelled with a single

Different disciplines available in Royal Navy Kayak Association

Freestyle: The fastest-growing discipline in kayaking. It is about using the water and performing tricks. It is dynamic, athletic and requires a high degree of control of the boat and a high degree of spatial awareness. There is a burgeoning competition element to this discipline.

White Water Racing: This is all about speed and is definitely competitive, it requires a unique style of kayak, designed to get down the white stuff as quickly as possible but with high buoyant volume for stability and safety. It requires fitness and stamina as well as a good understanding of white water in order to get the optimum racing line.

Canoe polo: This is a fast-paced game that combines personal skill with team work. In the modern version of the game teams of five compete in a suitably sized pool or on a piece of open water and the aim is to score as many goals against the opposition as possible.

Sea Kayaking: This is historically one of the earliest forms of paddling, with archaeological evidence suggesting highly developed craft and skilled hunter-fishermen as far back as 500 BC. Sea Kayaking is environmentally friendly and appeals to all ages who enjoy open spaces, salt air and the feeling of being at one with nature.

Sprint and marathon: This is one of the two Olympic events in the canoe world, and takes place on flat water at regattas. Distances raced are 200m, 500m, 1000m and 6,000m. The racing kayaks and canoes have to conform to international standards and specifications.

Surf: There is nothing quite like dropping in on a glassy ocean wave and carving it up. The speed is awesome; the power can be terrifying, but once you have tried it you will probably be hooked.

Slalom: It is a key element of international and Olympic competition. It requires a great deal of boat-handling skill to be able to make a series of gates.

Tough trip for ship's rugby team

HMS Argyll's rugby team played eleven matches in nine countries during the Type 23's deployment in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

The first game was a hard-fought match that saw Argyll secure a 14-14 draw against a spirited Bermuda side.

The games came thick and fast from then on with huge differences in the quality of the opposition and facilities from match-to-match. Argyll's game in Baltimore was played against a strong Chesapeake side on a state-of-the-art 4G pitch in front of a mainly military crowd.

The next game in Mexico was played on a very damp football pitch with a sad lack of rugby posts. However, this match did make it onto state television.

Overall HMS Argyll RFC played eleven games winning five, drawing two and losing four. Their largest victory came in Mexico with a resounding 70-5 victory; however, their greatest defeat a 69-10 thrashing by a high quality Fort Lauderdale side was by a very similar margin.

The games were played across 9 countries with three in the USA. The hardest match was a brutal 7-7 draw against a French army side in Martinique.



● Argyll's rugby team take on a side in Havana

Picture: LA(Phot) Stephen Johncock

ers in grande canyon



on the river as kayakers aim for the archway on the Ardèche River in France

bladed paddle (requiring either constant side swapping or a special J stroke).

The Joint Services Adventure Training Centres run sea kayak courses for all levels and offer both Joint Service and BCU qualifications.

For more information on sea kayaking opportunities within the RN and RM, speak to your UPTI, regional Adventure Training Office or contact the RNKA Sea Kayak Secretary (CPOACMN Joe Shelverton) at joe.shelverton704@mod.uk

For more information about the RNKA and the various disciplines available visit <http://www.rnka.co.uk/index.html>

For more details about the Ardèche gorge visit: <http://ardecheencano.e-monsite.com/pages/le-parcours/le.html>

■ The Royal Navy finished second at the Inter-Services Surf Kayak Championships off Saunton Sands, Devon.

Anyone wishing to give the sport a go should contact PO Jonathan Cowell at HMSSMST-ME-M2D@mod.uk or Cpl Adrian Thorn Adrian.thorn810@mod.uk.



● Royal Marines kayaked across the English Channel during the 1664 Challenge last year



● Kayaking near the Needles off the Isle of Wight

Officers claim victory in gig race

ROYAL Marines officers took on their non-commissioned officer colleagues at a gruelling gig race across Plymouth Sound.

Members of 30 Commando, from Stonehouse Barracks, took part in the challenge to row across Plymouth Sound and back.

The two-mile race started from the Camber sailing centre with two races staged, and the combined scores of both races determined the winners. The first race was close and, with a little interpretation of the rules by the officers, they won the first race in 10.21min.

The second race was more clear-cut with the officers having the added skill advantage of Capt Chris Nutting, an ex-British University Rowing Champ finalist – they stormed ahead and secured a second convincing win.

Sgt Lloyd Williams, 37, said: "Training and timing was key to this event and we lacked in both areas."

Capt Nutting said: "Not knowing who the crew was until the day of the race meant that we had no time to train together, all we had was five minutes practice before the start which is not enough, but we won. Slow is smooth and smooth is fast."



● Some of the Royal Marines preparing for the canoe race

Marines are back for one of toughest races

THE Royal Marines are back in numbers for one of the most arduous non-stop canoe races in the world.

The 125-mile Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race takes place over the Easter weekend.

The first 52 miles are along the Kennet and Avon Canal to Reading, the next 55 miles are on the River Thames to Teddington and the final 17-mile section is on the tidal portion of the Thames. The race has been held annually over the Easter weekend since 1948.

The Royal Marines have a proud history, both with individual entries and in the team event.

However, in recent years the operational focus has limited the amount of time and effort that has been dedicated to training for the event and therefore the number of entries has been reduced to a few keen individuals.

This year, due in no small part to the efforts of the Corps Drafting Officer and following on from the interest shown at the Inter-Services Marathon and Sprint Championships, will see a return of the full-time training camp for the Corps' team at CTCRM and the potential for success at Devizes to Westminster race.



● Members of the gig-racing teams line up



● Bob Penfold

Tribute to rugby stalwart

ROYAL Navy Rugby Union stalwart and former PTI Bob Penfold has been inducted into HMS Temeraire's PTI Hall of Fame.

Bob is the only former RNRU player to have achieved this honour and joins three others with rugby connections, Sean Cole (RNRU strength and conditioning coach) and the Rugby League duo of Wayne O'Kell and Jason Steele.

Still regularly seen on the touch line where both his sons, Rory and Michael, have represented the Royal Navy U23s, Bob is best remembered as an abrasive wing three-quarter with pace and power.

He made his Navy debut in 1981, which was an Inter-Service winning year with a 15-12 win over the RAF and a 7-3 victory in the Army Navy match.

He clearly made an impression in his debut season, as a 20-year old, because in the December of that year he was selected to win his first Combined Services cap against the touring Australians who fielded David Campese.

Bob was also in the next Royal Navy side to win the Inter-Services. However the team of 1987 also holds another claim to fame as they went through the season unbeaten. The season started with a narrow win over Cornwall, 7-3 before culminating ten matches later with a 13-6 victory over the Royal Air Force, to reclaim the title, having earlier comfortably beaten the Army 21-10.

Obviously the successful tour to Australia in 1986 had laid the foundations for the memorable campaign. Bob won the last of his caps in 1981.

However an 11-year career is an excellent achievement and it was only a number of deployments that prevented Bob from accumulating more than his 12 caps.

As a coach he achieved notable tournament wins in the Royal Navy and Devon 7s when serving at BRNC but probably his most testing and satisfying coaching achievement was introducing American Service personnel to a sport without body armour when serving with NATO in Naples.

Sign up to be an umpire

AN ECBACO Level 1 Cricket Umpires Course will be run at HMS Temeraire on February 9 to 11.

Successful completion of the course and passing of the final examination will enable the candidate to be awarded a Level 1 Cricket Umpire's certificate from ECBACO.

The civilian course cost is £90, including books and paperwork. For Military personnel, there is a significant subsidy available.

For further details and to enrol on the course contact Andy Stancliffe on 02392 573067 / 9380 28067.



Picture: Dave Sherfield

Veterans delighted with cross medals

EXPERIENCE counts, certainly on the **cross country** course anyway, as the Royal Navy proved during the United Services Cross Country League.

With a wealth of young talent from Exeter University again this time, the Royal Navy showed that they can still keep in the mix with the 'young'uns' as the results were announced following the final race of the season held at HMS Raleigh.

Lt Linda Lawrence, from the Royal Navy Submarine School, who consistently split the students, won the veteran over-35 category.

In second place was POPT Julie Wilsmore of HMS Drake, with POWTR Claire Kidd, who is currently based at Defence Maritime Logistics School, third.

Capt Gareth Hurst, of 42 Commando, took second in the men's veterans' race with Lt Cdr Tony Dunn in third place.

Exeter University swept the board with the male and female team prizes and the majority of the individual prizes, but Lt Michael Forrester, of BRNC, topped the senior male category, followed by Sgt David Knight from the Commando Logistic Regiment in second place.

Sub Lt Banford and LPT Tim Scrivener, both of BRNC, were fourth and fifth respectively.

This unique league, in the South West, brings together serving and retired members of all Royal Navy and Royal Marine establishments, along with the potential Officers in the Exeter University Officer Training Corps (EOTC) and the University Royal Navy Unit (URNU).

Runners can compete at six races over the three-month period from the Looe Bar coastal route (RNAS Culdrose) to Woodbury Common (Royal Marines Lympstone) and accumulate points as an individual and as part of a team.

Teams competed from the Fire Service, Devon and Cornwall Police, 42 Commando Bickleigh, 40 Commando Taunton, RNAS Culdrose, RNAS Yeovilton, HMS Drake, HMS Raleigh, Britannia Royal Naval College, Commando Training Centre Royal Marines Lympstone, 30 Commando Stonehouse, 29 Commando Citadel, Commando Logistics Regiment Royal Marines Chivenor, EOTC and Exeter University.

Anyone interested in either cross-country, athletics or road running should contact Lt Lawrence or LPT Rushton.

Sultan's kings pack a punch



● AET Jack Cairns pushes forwards on his way to victory against Mne Andrew Metcalfe

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins

A STUNNING display of skill, moral fibre, dedication and pride was seen at the HMS Sultan Boxing Show.

The annual event, which pits the establishment's boxers against local rivals HMS Collingwood, was once again a sell-out with seven bouts on the evening's card.

The evening was an excellent opportunity for the boxers to gain experience of performing within the glitzy environment of a Royal Navy Boxing Dinner show.

The Royal Navy's Boxing team complemented the programme, competing in the ring were Mne Nathan Greenaway taking on University of Portsmouth and Gym 01 boxer Andy Moore and Mne Andrew Metcalfe who fought Sultan boxer ETME Jack Cairns.

For many of those participating it was the first time they had entered the ring for a competitive bout and the evening was a great opportunity to test their skills.

HMS Sultan's boxers put in a strong performance throughout the evening in the four bouts between HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood.

As the evening drew to a close, and with the competition tied at 2-0, the hosts were delighted to be declared as winners, retaining the boxing trophy for the fourth year running as holders.

On completion of the evening, HMS Sultan boxing squad

coach LPT Mat Phillips said: "All the boxers competing tonight, whether from Sultan or Collingwood, are on demanding career courses and have been working very hard leading up to this show."

"They have put in months of hard work, training in their own time in the mornings and evenings, to get mentally and physically prepared."

"They have done themselves and their establishments proud."

"Having members of the RN boxing team box alongside them will show them what they can aspire to in the future."

Results: Mne Nathan Greenaway beat Andy Moore; Paul Smith beat LETME Chris Pascoe; AET Jack Cairns beat Mne Andrew Metcalfe; AET Kris Fort beat AET Louis Martin; AET Jacob Beetson beat AB Sam Chmloskyj; LETWE Henry Wicks beat ETME Calvin Jones; LETME David Gibson beat LETWE Liam Price.



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